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CJPS - 4002198 - S-P6048

THE CALCUTTA JOURNAL OF POLITICAL STUDIES

Vol V Nos. 1 & 2

1985-86

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## POLITICAL PARTIES IN INDIA : CHANGES IN ELECTORAL PROPAGANDA

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Science can attain perfection only when

it succeeds in making use of mathematics

KARL MARX

WITH A VIEW to studying the positions of the Indian political parties on issues of socioeconomic and political development, and changes in the electoral propaganda, a content analysis of election manifestos issued for five parliamentary elections — 1962, 1967, 1971 and 1980<sup>1</sup> — has been done in this article. A total of 33 manifestos of 15 national parties has been analysed.<sup>2</sup> The 1962-1980 period was fairly indicative. It was precisely in the 1960s and the 1970s that India experienced an intensive political struggle over issues of socioeconomic transformation, and it appears that by the early 1980s the country entered into a new stage of development.

In particular, a certain evolution was shown by the fairly specific party structure (in other words, the party organization and grouping of contending social and class forces), which had begun to take shape in the period of freedom struggle, established itself in the first 10 or 15 years of independence. True, the main feature of this structure has survived — the dominance of the ruling party, the Indian National Congress, over the fragmented opposition at the national level. However, both the ruling (dominant) party itself and the opposition have noticeably changed.

The Indian National Congress (INC and since 1978 INC(I)) suffered a number of splits which led to changes in the composition of its leadership at various levels. These splits by themselves did not essentially reflect on the share of the votes obtained by the dominant party in parliamentary elections on the scale of a vast country with

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an extraordinary diversity of conditions prevailing in its 22 ethnolinguistic states. With certain fluctuations, the share of votes of INC-INC(I) showed some tendency towards reduction. It diminished from 44·7 per cent in the third general election of 1962 to 42·6 per cent in the sixth election of 1980. In 1980 the dominant party regained its position after its single electoral defeat in 1977, when it polled 34·5 per cent of the votes. However, in the 1984 parliamentary elections, which are outside the scope of the present study, the INC(I) polled 49·2 per cent of the votes. But the elections were not held in two states. Otherwise, the percentage of the votes for the INC(I) would have been somewhat smaller, yet probably exceeding its votes in 1980.

The opposition has also changed markedly enough. With the exception of the communists — the Communist Party of India (CPI) and the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI-M) — no national opposition party which existed in the 1960s has survived, at least under the same name. The rise and fall in 1977-1979 of the combine of non-communist opposition parties — the Janata Party — and also the splits suffered by the INC in 1977 and 1978 resulted in the emergence of a number of new opposition parties. However, more often than not they comprise now-reshuffled groupings which functioned in the former opposition parties or in the INC. This probably reflects a certain transformation of socio-political forces, which has started at the present new stage of the development of the country.

As before 1977-1980 none of the opposition parties individually can poll more than 10 per cent of the popular votes on the national scale. The Janata Party polled 43 per cent of the votes in the parliamentary elections of 1977, but it split in 1979. The smaller formation which participated under the same name in the 1980 elections won only 19 per cent of the votes, but again split shortly after the elections.

The share of votes of the national opposition parties had increased from 34 per cent in 1962 to 42 per cent in 1980, but dropped to 31 per cent in 1984. The percentage of votes polled by the other opposition parties, which, as a rule function within individual states (the "state" and smaller parties) had declined from 10 per cent in

1962 to 8 per cent in 1980, but clearly increased to 12 per cent in 1984, whereas the share of the votes for the independents decreased steadily from 11 per cent in 1962 to 6 per cent in 1980, rising somewhat again to 8 per cent in 1984. This points to the development of organized political parties. It has an important specific feature, which the present author calls the regional development of opposition parties in India. Here the substantial (about 20 per cent of the votes or more) following, if any, of an opposition party is concentrated and grows (if it does) either only in a few states (usually not more than in three states) in the case of opposition parties recognized as national, or only in one state in the case of major state (regional) parties. However, each national opposition party has some following in many states. Yet it is only the INC(I) which has a substantial following (usually more than 30 per cent and sometimes more than a half of the popular votes) nearly in all the states. That makes the INC(I) the dominant party at least at the national level.

In this situation, while no single opposition party can challenge the INC(I) in elections to parliament on the national scale, in a number of states there are already parties which are able to successfully compete with the INC(I) in the elections to the state legislative assemblies (usually in electoral agreements with other parties) and to form rather stable state governments. In some cases the parties capable of competing with the INC(I) in individual states are national parties, but more often they are regional parties. The number of states governed by such parties has been on the increase, particularly since the late 1970s, and it now exceeds one-third of all the states. These parties function as governmental parties in the respective states, but are, as a rule, in opposition at the national level, while the INC(I), being the ruling party at this level, functions usually as the major opposition party in the states governed by other parties. This provides for the unity of a vast and diverse country under a parliamentary democracy at least as long as the ruling party remains firmly in power at the centre.

It should be noted that since the major parties opposing the INC(I) in different states are often disparate, ranging from the communists to conservative parties of communal and casteist

complexions, while the regional parties also differ from one another and have various regional limitations, the emergence of an all-India party as the alternative of the INC(I) — in other words, the rise of a two-party system at the national level — seems to be ruled out in India at least in the near future. However, something like this system has already grown in a few Indian states.

The changes in the party structure have appeared along with the evolution of the positions of parties on many important issues as well as with the changes in electoral propaganda. The procedure employed in the present study of this evolution, the results obtained and their possible interpretation can be submitted here only in brief.

#### Procedure

The procedure of the content analysis worked out by the author for the purpose of studying the election manifestos of the Indian political parties makes it possible to obtain certain indicators presented in tables and diagrams.

1 *Orientation of Positions on Concrete Issues.* The degree of orientation to the social change and progress of the declared positions of the given party in the given elections on concrete economic, social and political issues (measures), or, on the contrary, the degree of its opposition to social change, which, in particular, makes it possible to classify different parties into certain categories.

2 *Aim Declaring* The composition and intensity of the use of the certain positive socio-political notions in the manifestos, which in its own way reflects the declared goal orientation.

3 *Criticism* The composition and intensity of the use of certain negative socio-political notions and the negative references to certain groups of propertied classes which reflect the degree, character and intensity of the given party's criticism of existing conditions and orders.

4 *The Orientation of the Appeal* The frequencies of positive references to various social classes, sections and groups.

By handling these indicators one can bring out and visually present the evolution of the positions of parties and, accordingly, the

changes of the differences (a) between individual parties and (b) between the groups of parties from one election to another throughout the period under review. It can also provide information on other aspects of political development. For instance, the index *Orientation of the Appeal* not only characterizes in its own way the parties themselves, but also gives original information about the political weight (and its dynamics) of various mass social groups as voters.

#### *Position on Concrete Issues*

The positions of political parties on 81 different economic, social and political issues declared in the manifestos have been analysed here. As a rule, these are such issues, positions on which, of necessity, imply concrete measures or demands (at least such as "expand", "increase", "reduce" or "limit" something, "assist" or "protect" someone's rights or interests, etc.).

The 81 issues have been divided into the following 16 groups called here "Special Groups" (SG) :

- (1) nationalization (7) ; (2) cooperative (joint) farming (1) ;
- (3) public sector (12) ; (4) ceiling on landholding and protection of the rights of tenants ("land") (7) ; (5) the overcoming of the shackling forms of exploitation of the rural poor (for relevant measures see below) (5) ; (6) change of the constitution to facilitate socioeconomic transformation and the exclusion of the right of property from among the fundamental rights (2) ; (7) the role of the state in the development and economic regulation (including the curbing of local and foreign monopolies (except their nationalization) (9) ; (8) the strategy of economic development (correlation between industry and agriculture, between large-scale and small-scale production) (4) ; (9) measures to develop agriculture and assist the farmers (including remunerative agricultural prices, supply and marketing cooperatives, *antyodaya*, etc.) (4) ; (10) the conditions of the industrial labour (2) ; (11) secularism (protection of the minorities) (5) ; (12) communalism (measures which bear a communal character) (3) ; (13) caste equality (measures in favour of the scheduled and "backward" castes) (6) ; (14) political system (parliamentary or presidential, changes in the electoral system, ban on defections) (4) ; (15) foreign policy (non-alignment, Indo-Soviet relations, relations with the "west") (6) ; and (16) anti-communism (4).

The positions on each issue (measure) were made subject of evaluation<sup>8</sup> by experts from the point of view of its relative significance for socioeconomic transformation or social progress in general in scores ranging from +5 to -5. The experts were offered to make the evaluation by comparing the positions only on issues which comprise one special group, but without comparing the significance of the positions on issues which have entered various special groups. Consequently, no comparison of the scores of the same party on different special groups, any more than in different "aggregate groups" (AG), has been made. But it is possible to compare the scores of the given party on the same special group or aggregate group at different elections or the scores of different parties on the same special group or aggregate group.

Below, as an example, is cited the set of issues (measures) which have formed *Special Group No 3* : "Public Sector" (PS), and the average of the expert evaluations (in brackets) : (1) PS should hold commanding heights in the economy (+4·5) ; (2) PS should be expanded (+3·0) ; (3) PS should be built in the basic industries (+4·3) ; (4) PS should be developed also in the consumer goods industries (+4·0) ; (5) PS should be instrumental in ensuring economic restructuring (+3·5) ; (6) PS and the private sector should be complementary (-0·6) ; (7) PS should develop only in the infrastructure (-2·2) ; (8) PS projects should be set up only in industries where the private sector is reluctant to invest (-3·3) ; (9) a "joint sector" should be established (-0·3) ; (10) private investments should be allowed in the industries reserved for the PS (-4·8) ; and (11) certain public enterprises should be privatized (-5·0). In the case of a negative position on the issue evaluated by the experts by a positive score, the latter changes into negative, e.g., +3·0 changes into -3·0.

On the basis of the summation of the average expert evaluations of the scores on each issue (measure) included in a certain special group a "Total Original Score" (TOS)<sup>9</sup> was obtained. It characterizes the position of the given party on this group of issues as a whole in the given elections. With a view to obtaining a broader quantified (if approximate) generalization of the party's positions on a number of special groups and on all special groups (all

considered issues) taken together, the following procedure was adopted :

First, the TOS's on some special groups had special weights attributed to them. Secondly, several special groups were brought together into an "aggregate group" (AG) and the TOS's whether original or specially weighted, for each of these special groups were summed up accordingly, which produced an "Aggregate Score" (AS). Thirdly, the summation of ASs yielded the most generalized index of the given party's positions in the given elections — its "General Aggregate Score" (GAS).

Thus, special groups (SGs) Nos. 1—3 were combined into Aggregate Group I — "Issues Relating to Public Property and Joint Farming." The total original scores (TOSs) for the given SGs (these are designated  $a_1$ ,  $a_2$ , and  $a_3$  respectively) had the following special weights attributed to them : TOS for SG No 1, "nationalization", was squared ( $a_1^2$ ), TOS for SG No 2, "Joint farming", was squared and then diminished by  $\frac{1}{2} (0.75 a_2^2)$ , TOS for SG No 4, "land", designated as  $c_1$ , had special weight  $0.5 c_1^2$  attributed to it. In the case of squared TOS's negative value the sign remained unchanged. The attribution of special weights to the aforementioned indices is determined by the exceptional importance of the relevant issues, which affect, albeit to varying extents, the relations of property provoking most acute ideological and political struggle.

Aggregate Group I (accordingly, SGs Nos 1-3) as well as SGs Nos 4-6 (the latter two TOS's are unchanged) have comprised another, larger Aggregate group II — "Socioeconomic Transformation." The aggregate score (AS) of a party on issues of this group represents the sum-total of the party's scores for the groups which have gone into it.

The remaining special groups (i.e. SGs Nos 7-16) were brought together into Aggregate Group III — "Issues Directly Unconnected with Socioeconomic Transformation", which have been called here, "The Remaining Issues". Only the TOS for Special Group No 15 "Foreign Policy" (F) had a special weight attributed to it —  $0.5 F^2$ . In the deduction of the General Aggregate Score (GAS) of a party for all groups, i.e. in the summation of the Total Original Scores (TOS), whether original or specially weighted, the TOS for the

Special Groups which have formed Aggregate Group IV were halved.

It is obvious that the expert evaluations themselves and, moreover, the special weights attributed by the author to a number of Total Original Scores obtained as a result of such evaluations, bear a more or less subjective character. However, the scale thus obtained was equally applied to estimate the positions of all parties in all elections in the period under review. Consequently, the quantification of differences between the positions of different parties, just as between those adopted by one party at different times, of necessity reflects, if approximately, a certain socio-political reality.

It is another matter that the positions of the parties of the propertied classes declared in the manifestos on certain issues (measures), if concrete, may fail to correspond to the real intentions of the party leadership or its influential section, that is, are futile election promises. Nevertheless, the differences themselves (and their degrees) in the declared positions of the parties on concrete issues (measures, demands), just as the differences in those adopted by one party at different times, undoubtedly are of major significance in a number of respects. Suffice it to say that nobody prevented a party, such as the Jan Sangh, from declaring in its manifestos positions identical to those declared in the manifestos of the Indian National Congress, and from writing manifestos like those of the communists. Naturally, however, neither the former nor the latter has ever happened.

In a number of cases a party, for tactical considerations of the moment, can modify its positions on some concrete issues or even avoid taking a position at all in the given elections. However, it is for precisely this reason that the bringing out of the dynamics of differences between the declared positions of one party and between its positions and those of other parties in successive elections yields information both about the tactics of the given party itself at the appropriate time and about the political situation as a whole.

#### *Frequency Indices*

The frequency indices of "Aim Declaring", "Criticism" and "Orientation of Appeal" were made by a calculation of the

frequencies of occurrence of certain socio-political notions, or terms and also the references to different social groups. The notions were divided into the following groups and subgroups, which received their designations in accordance with the content of the notions included in them, and the frequencies of occurrence of the latter were summed up by such groups or subgroups.

The General Aggregate Index (GAI) — “Aim Declaring” — represents the sum-total of the frequencies of occurrence of the notions cited below, which are generally adopted as positive and were used as such in the manifestos. Only one of such notions, “socialism”, was used negatively in the 1962-1971 period by certain parties (the Jan Sangh, the Swatantra, and the BKD) from among those which are described below as conservative. The reformist parties invariably, and the conservative ones since 1977, have been using the notion of “socialism” only positively, not infrequently, along with certain qualifications such as “democratic” or “Gandhian.”

The GAI “Aim Declaring” includes the following component indices : (1) “social transformation” (the notions of “socialism”, “social transformation”, or “social change”, or “social progress”), (2) “progress” (the notions of “progress”, “equality”, “modernization”), (3) “secularism” (the notion of “secularism”), (4) independence” (the notions of “independence”, “self-reliance”, “national, or freedom movement” and (5) “democracy” (the notion of “democracy”). The component indices Nos 1-3 can be brought together into an “aggregate index” (AI) — “Social Progress”.

The Aggregate Index (AI) — “Criticism” — represents the sum-total of the frequencies of occurrence of the notions cited below which are commonly adopted as negative and are used as such in the manifestos as well as of the frequencies of occurrence of negative references to “traditions” and propertied classes. Its component indices are :

- (1) “criticism of socioeconomic conditions” (the notions of “capitalism”, “feudalism”, “exploitation”, “inequality”, “concentration of economic power in a few hands”);
- (2) “criticism of specific social conditions” (the notions of “communalism”, “social oppression”, “casteism”, “violence against the Harijans”),
- (3) “criticism of political conditions” (the notions of “authoritarianism”, “suppression of civil

rights", "suppression of mass movements or actions", "fraud" (in politics, propaganda, etc.), "fascism"), and (4) "anti-imperialism" (the notions of "imperialism", "neo-colonialism", "racism").

The Differentiated Index (DI) — "Traditionalism" — has been made up of the notions which express attitude to socio-historical traditions, religion (as ideology) as well as declared emphasis on "moral and spiritual values." The frequencies of occurrence of notions such as these are divided into two groups (two indices) depending on positive and negative attitude to these phenomena. The negative references were included as the fifth component index in AI "Criticism".

The components of the Differentiated Index (DI) — "Attitude to Propertied classes" — are :

(1) "the rich" (the notions which characterize the rich and the privileged etc. in general), (2) "The local monopolies" (monopolies "big industrial houses", "big business" etc.), (3) "foreign monopolies" ("foreign monopolies", "multinational corporations", "foreign capital" etc.), (4) "small" or "new" entrepreneurs, (5) agrarians ("landowners", "money-lenders", "rich" or "big" farmers and (6) "economic offenders" ("speculators", "hoarders" etc.). The indicator "Attitude to the Propertied classes" was included (except for the few positive references) as the sixth component indicator in AI "Criticism".

The indicators of the "Orientation of Appeal" are the frequencies of occurrence of references to the following groups and categories :

(1) "people" (in general); (2) "working people", ("the poor", "the masses", etc.); (3) "industrial workers" ("labour"); (4) "peasants" (in general); (5) "poor peasants" ("small and marginal farmers", etc.); (6) "agricultural labourers"; (7) "scheduled castes (harijans and scheduled tribes); (8) intelligentsia ("employees", "teachers", "scientists", "writers", "artists", etc.); (9) youth (including students); (10) "backward classes" or "backward castes"; and (11) "minorities" ("muslims" etc.).

Although the frequencies of occurrence themselves are objectively obtained facts of the given document (of course, in the absence of errors of calculation), to the author they appear to be of lesser importance compared to estimates in scores of positions of the party

on concrete issues (measures, demands). The use of abstract notions leaves much greater scope for demagogism than the party's declaration of its positions on concrete issues. However, as will be seen, frequency indices offer additional information for the characterization (in dynamics) of different parties and of the orientation of their election propaganda, and thus for the study of political development.

### Results

In outline, the obtained results show the following trends in the evolution of positions of parties on concrete issues :

First, there has been a considerable drop in the confrontation between the different non-communist parties, i.e. between the reformist and the conservative parties on issues of socioeconomic transformation, particularly on issues pertaining to property relations. However, differences on a number of other issues — many of major importance — continue, if not intensify.

Secondly, the reformist orientation of the positions of the dominant party — INC-INC(I) — specially on issues connected with property relations, first showed a climb and reached its peak in 1971, then abated. At the same time, on some important socioeconomic questions this party remains ahead of other non-communist parties.

Thirdly, on the whole, there was a shrinkage of differences between the reformist and the conservative parties. In this particular case the reformist parties are those whose positions have been objectively (i.e., irrespective of subjective strivings) directed at bourgeois transformations of the society inherited from the colonial-feudal past, and the conservative ones are those whose positions have objectively resisted social transformation. Incidentally, during the period under review there was a considerable change in the concrete content both of national (i.e. essentially bourgeois) reformism and of conservatism.

Considering the latter circumstance and using the data obtained by the above procedure of the content analysis of the manifestos,

among the reformist parties should be counted those whose General Aggregate Score (GAS) are positive (in diagram I they are located above the zero line) and markedly exceed half of the GASs which the dominant party — INC-INC(I) — had in 1977 and in 1980, when this party's GASs (practically the same in both years) were the lowest in the entire period under review. Alongside the INC-INC(I), there were the following reformist parties : the Praja Socialist Party ( PSP, 1962-1971 )<sup>6</sup>, the Samyukta Socialist Party ( SSP, 1967-1971 ), the Congress for Democracy ( CFD, 1977 ), the Janata Party ( JP, 1980 )<sup>8</sup> and the Indian National Congress ( Socialist ) ( INC (S), 1980 ).

Accordingly, those parties whose GASs are either negative ( on diagram I, they occupy positions below the zero line ) or, although positive, are markedly less than a half of the said minimal GASs of the INC-INC (I) are counted as conservative. These are : the Jan Sangh ( JS, 1962-1971 ) and the modified successor to the latter, the Bhartiya Janata Party ( BJP, 1980 )<sup>7</sup> the Swatantra Party ( SW, 1962-1972 ), the Indian National Congress ( Organization ) ( INC (O), 1971 ), the Janata Party ( JP, 1977 )<sup>8</sup>, the Bhartiya Kranti Dal ( BKD, 1971 ) and its modified successor, the Lok Dal ( LD, 1980 )<sup>9</sup>.

Fourthly, whereas according to our data, in the 1962-1971 period the positions of the reformist opposition parties—PSP and SSP—on concrete issues of social transformation, as a rule cede to the positions of the ruling INC ( which conflicts with fairly common conceptions ), in 1980 the INC (S) and the JP announced slightly more reformist-oriented positions on some important issues than those of the ruling INC (I). The evaluation is shown by the data given below.

The General Aggregate Score ( GAS ), which represents a summary characteristic of the positions of the given party, trebled in the case of the INC-INC (I) in 1971<sup>10</sup> compared to 1962, and in 1980 dropped slightly lower ( by one-tenth ) than in 1962 ( table 1 and diagram 1 ). And, as will be seen further, the aggregate score ( AS ) of the INC-INC (I) on issues related directly to socioeconomic transformation and affecting, as a rule, property relations (Aggregate Group II) showed a fairly sharp drop, whereas on a number of other issues which have entered Aggregate Group III ( "The Remaining

Issues"), the relevant score of this party noticeably increased. This determined only a slight change in the General Aggregate Score (GAS) of the INC-INC (I) in 1980 compared to 1962.

The average GAS of the reformist opposition parties, which in the past had usually (except in 1967) been below the GAS of the ruling INC-INC (I), in 1980 was found to be slightly above the latter. The average GAS of the conservative parties considerably changed in the 1962-1980 period: instead of being negative it became positive, but is one-tenth and less than one-tenth that of the reformist parties, both the ruling one and the opposition ones. As a result of these changes, in the 1962-1980 period the distance in scores between the reformist (including the INC-INC (I)) and the conservative parties by the given index was halved.

The evolution of the party positions on the issues which form Aggregate Group II—"Socioeconomic Transformation" (SET), specially the issues of Aggregate Group I—"Public Property and Joint Farming" (table 2, diagrams 2 and 3) assumed much more clear and partly different forms. The aggregate score of the INC-INC (I) on the issues of SET in 1980 shrank by 44 per cent compared to 1962 and to one-fifth compared to 1971. Incidentally, in 1980 the aggregate scores on SET of the INC (C)—52 and of the JP—41, obviously exceeded the relevant score of the INC (I)—27. The average aggregate score on SET of the conservative parties changed from -62 to -6 (BJP: +3, LD: -14).

The most considerable evolution was registered by the positions of non-communist parties on issues of Aggregate Group I—"Public Property and Joint Farming." Here the aggregate score of the INC-INC (I) in 1980 shrank to one-sixth compared to 1962 and to one-thirteenth compared to 1971. The scores of the opposition reformist parties INC (C)—16—and the JP—12, also low as they were in 1980, exceeded the score of the INC (I)—7. The scores of the conservative parties in 1980 were: BJP +3, LD: -18. Thus, whereas the bourgeois-reformist positions of the ruling INC-INC (I) became more moderate (specially in what is concerned with relations of property, above all, public property), the positions of the conservative parties evolved from outright reaction to conservatism tinged by bourgeois reformism.

As a whole, the differences between the positions of the non-communist parties on issues of socioeconomic transformation have considerably shrunk, but obviously persisted. The standard deviation of the indicator—Aggregate Score II “Socioeconomic Transformation”—of these parties ( i.e., the level of differences between them separately, and not by groups ) comprised 54 in 1962 and 24 in 1980, i.e. more than halved.

A fairly complex pattern of evolution is manifest by the positions of the parties on issues related to agrarian transformation. In the 1960s-1970s two of its spheres evolved. One was the setting of the ceiling on landholding, that is, partial redistribution of land as such in favour of the landless ( the abolition of the “intermediaries” ) and protection of the tenants. The other sphere is defined by the author as measures to overcome the shackling forms of exploitation of the rural poor, i.e., of the poor peasants and the agricultural workers. Among such measures were the granting of house sites, a moratorium or the cancellation of debts of the rural poor to the money-lenders, the emancipation of the bonded labourers, minimum wages to the agricultural workers, their organization, etc. In view of the considerable specific features of the social structure of the Indian countryside; where the traditionally oppressed and shackled poor comprised up to 50 per cent of the population, measures such as this now, in the course of bourgeois development and the awakening of the rural poor, began to acquire particular relevance, although they leave the property relations only slightly affected or not affected directly.

Accordingly, the issues pertaining to agrarian transformation were divided into two special groups, Nos 4 and 5. The evolution of positions of parties on issues of special group No 4—“Ceiling on Landholding and Protection of Tenants” (“Land”) (table 3, diagram 4) is more or less similar to the evolution on issues of socio-economic transformation as a whole. The aggregate score of the INC-INC (I) here increased by one-fifth in 1980 compared to 1962, but shrank to one-sixth compared to 1971. Incidentally, in 1980 the scores of opposition reformist parties INC (C)—28 and the JP—21 were way above the score of the INC (I)—5.

A high score — 27 — is registered by the Lok Dal which is a sort of an agrarian party speaking in the name of the peasantry and

advocating "peasant proprietorship" more vocally than others. However, it is indicative that its score on issues of overcoming the shackling forms of exploitation of the rural poor is much lower than those of all parties except the other conservative party — BJP, which, in its Basic Policy Statement of 1980 simply bypassed issues of agrarian transformation.

The evolution of the positions of the non-communist parties on the measures to overcome the shackling forms of exploitation of the rural poor (table 3, diagram 4) is the opposite of the evolution of their positions on issues (measures) variously affecting property relations. The INC as well as the other parties advanced the said measures in their manifestos mainly in the elections of 1977 and 1980, whereas previously they had either referred to these measures in passing or had not referred to them at all. In 1980 the INC (I) was clearly ahead of other bourgeois parties in this index (score) : the INC (I)—15, the JP—8, the INC (C)—8. Meanwhile, the score of the LD here was only four whereas that of the BJP was zero.

The evolution of the positions of the parties of the propertied classes on issues which comprise Aggregate Group III—"The Remaining Issues" (table 4, diagram 6) is both similar to, and largely different from, their evolution on the previous indicators. "The Remaining Issues" themselves do not affect the property relations and do not directly pertain to socioeconomic transformation, although they undoubtedly have a bearing on it, too. These are mostly questions of economic regulation and partly strategy of economic development, communal and caste relations, political system and foreign policy. The aggregate score of the INC-INC (I) here first (by 1971) had considerably grown (this was partly due to the increase of the specially weighted score on foreign policy issues), and then shrank. But even now it is almost twice as high as it was in 1962. Incidentally, in 1980 the INC (I) had the same score on these issues (67) as the INC (S), whose score was 66, and was noticeably ahead of that of the JP, whose score was 43. In the 1962-1980 period the average aggregate score on "The Remaining Issues" of the reformist parties put together, including the ruling party, grew from +23 to +59, and that of the conservative parties rose from +4 to +24. Incidentally, the distance (in scores) between

the two groups not only did not shrink, but on the contrary, almost doubled rising from 19 to 35.

Presumably, it was precisely this change that reflected on the shrinkage of connection between the indicators of the positions of parties on issues of Aggregate Group III—"Socioeconomic Transformation", on the one hand, and of Aggregate Group IV—"The Remaining Issues", on the other. The Kendall coefficient of correlation of ranks of the parties in these indicators comprised : 1·00 ( complete coincidence of ranks ) in 1962, 0·60 in 1967, 0·81 in 1971 and 0·40 in 1980. However, except for one case ( INC (O), 1971 ) all the conservative parties invariably ( i.e., in all elections ) had lower ranks in both indicators than all the reformist parties. Meanwhile, the decrease of the rank correlation coefficient was due to the non-coincidence of the ranks within these two groups of parties. This means that despite certain change of the character of reformism and conservatism, the very division of the parties into such two groups persists.

However, such division did not prevent the formation in the 1970s of groupings of opposition parties which included both the conservative and the reformist parties. But such groupings were found to be fairly unstable, an important reason for this being the differences between the party positions. Meanwhile, it appears that changes in the arrangement of the parties in diagrams 1-3, among other things, in their own way fairly well reflect the processes of formation of party groupings in the 1970s.

With regard to the 1962-1967 period diagrams 1-3 distinctly show two groups of the non-communist parties : the reformist parties, the INC, the PSP and the SSP, on the one hand, and the conservative parties—the Jan Sangh and the Swatantra Party—on the other. They also show that by 1967 the polarization of the positions of political parties increased. There was an abrupt shift upwards in the positions of the PSP, and still more radical positions than before were now taken by the communists ( specially as shown in diagrams 2 and 3 ) which are radically different from all the other parties. Therefore they will be discussed separately.

These shifts by 1967 apparently indicated important changes on the political arena which had taken place by 1971—in particular, the

split of the ruling INC in 1969 and certain subsequent radicalization of its reformist positions. At the same time, the SSP (1967) is located noticeably lower than the INC and the PSP in diagram 1 and comes right up to the INC, or stands fairly close to it, but much lower than the PSP in diagrams 2 and 3. Apparently, this was due to the striving of the SSP leadership to bring about a common front of opposition parties of various complexions ("total anti-Congressism"). In other words, diagram 1 reflects, in its own way and more than the other diagrams, the tendency of coalition politics which had arisen by 1967 and was further developed in the subsequent period.

Diagrams 1-3 show that by 1971 the radicalization of the reformist positions of the ruling INC had taken a shape. They also show a grouping of four opposition parties which formed what was then known as the Grand Alliance. It included both the conservative parties—the INC (O), the Jan Sangh, the Swatantra Party—and the reformist ones—the PSP and the SSP. Remarkably, the INC (O), which arose from the split of the ruling INC in 1969, occupied in diagram 1 a position right in the middle of the vertical row of the main parties of the Alliance. It is also indicative that the Jan Sangh and the Swatantra Party now find themselves above the zero line in diagrams 1 and 2 and below this line (together with the INC (O)), but still close to it in diagram 3, "Public Property".

A party's place at the zero line indicates either the blurred, indefinite nature of its positions or their discrepancy. The change in the positions of the Jan Sangh and the Swatantra Party and their togetherness with the INC (O) in 1971 apparently reflected the incipient evolution from positions largely rooted in the colonial-feudal past to a relatively more modern bourgeois conservatism.

Apparently, a role here was played by coalition politics, the very attempt to set up the Alliance. In 1971 only the BKD was below the zero line. The BKD later formed the core of the Lok Dal (LD). This party, which can be construed as a kind of agrarian party, first participated in parliamentary elections in 1971, opposed the public sector as sharply as the Swatantra and the Jan Sangh did in the 1962-1967 period. However, unlike the latter two, it increasingly combined attacks on the public sector with criticism of the

monopolies and demand for "peasant proprietorship" directed against the remnants of feudal landlordism.

In the 1977 elections the main contestants were the INC and the Janata party, which had been formed by the different opposition parties, both conservative and reformist. However, the Janata combine was dominated by the conservative parties and in diagram 1 and 2 found itself at a level almost twice as low as that of the INC in 1977, although the INC level sharply dropped compared to not only 1971 but also to 1962 and 1967. In diagram 3, "Public Property", the Janata Party is located below the zero line. At the same time, in diagram 1, where the arrangement of the parties is determined more (and in diagrams 2 and 3 wholly) by positions on issues of socioeconomic transformation than on other issues, the INC and the Janata Party now found themselves much closer to each other than the reformist and conservative parties in any other election. This was largely due to the specific conditions under which the 1977 elections were actually held following the Emergency (mid-1975 to the beginning of 1977) and in which the main role was played by relevant political issues. However, the proximity of the INC and the Janata Party in these diagrams must also have reflected the virtual narrowing of the differences between the positions of the reformist and conservatives on the issue of socioeconomic transformation.

With reference to 1980, diagram 1 again clearly reveals the presence of two groups of non-communist parties, as in the 1962-1967 period. However, now the distance between them is twice as short, although it is much longer than the distance between the INC and the Janata Party in 1977. One of these groups is formed by the ruling INC (I) and the opposition parties—the Janata Party and the INC (S), the other only by the opposition parties—the BJP and the LD, which in diagram 1 lie very close to each other, and only slightly above the zero line.

This makes the following circumstances appear indicative. Despite appeals for re-creating a combine like the Janata Party of 1977 and efforts to this effect, two groupings of opposition parties began to be formed in 1982-1983. On the one hand, the BJP and the LD, which had electoral agreements, first, in the legislative assembly

elections in Haryana in 1982, then in the elections to the Delhi Metropolitan Council early in 1983, subsequently decided to form their own combine, called the National Democratic Alliance. On the other hand, the JP, the INC (S) and two other newly-formed reformist parties announced the formation of their United Front. However, none of these combinations survived till the parliamentary elections in 1984. The attempts or calls to form something like the Janata combine of 1977 at the national level failed completely. Only electoral agreements (but not more than that) were reached by various parties only at the state level in a number of states. As a rule this did not prevent the INC (I) from winning the Lok Sabha elections even in such states. But electoral agreements helped the major non-Congress parties of these states to subsequently win the elections to the state legislative assemblies held in 1985 and form the governments there.

The Janata combine of 1977 was brought about mainly by the two following factors. There were : (a) the deepening of the reformist policy of the ruling INC in the first half of the 1970s, and (b) the conditions of the Emergency (1975-1977). As these two factors ceased existing when the Janata Party itself came to power, the Janata combine soon fell apart and subsequent attempts to form something like it were doomed.

#### *Changes in Electoral Propaganda*

The limited size of the present paper makes it possible to present only the "aggregate" frequency indices (AFIs) of "Aim Declaring" and "Criticism" and that too very briefly. These indices have changed considerably—which is both similar to, and different from, that of the positions of the parties on concrete issues.

In the cases of the ruling INC-INC (I) and the reformist parties in general these indices have obviously decreased, whereas in the case of the conservative parties, on the contrary, they have increased (specially "Criticism"). and, accordingly, the difference between the two groups of parties has noticeably narrowed. Incidentally, whereas previously the conservative parties in both of these indicators were far behind the INC and the reformist opposition parties, now the conservative parties have come more or less at the

same level with reformist ones in "Aim Declaring" surpassing them in "Criticism", specially in its component CFI—"Criticism of Political Conditions", but also in another component CFI—"Criticism of Socioeconomic Conditions" (table 5 and diagrams 8-10).

The increase of both aggregate indices "Aim Declaring" and "Criticism" in 1971, and specially in 1977, was due predominantly to an increase in certain components of the indices, namely "Democracy", on the one hand, and "Criticism of Political Conditions", on the other (table 6, diagram 10).

Similar changes are also shown by the mean values and the standard deviation of two indicators in the case of the non-communist parties. Incidentally, the latter was obviously smaller in 1980 compared to 1962, although the average value of "Criticism" remained almost unchanged (table 7).

Attention should also be drawn to the connection between the indices which characterize the positions of the parties on concrete issues (in scores), on the one hand, and "Aim Declaring" and "Criticism", on the other. Such a connection exists. This furnishes evidence of the relevance of the proposed procedure of obtaining evaluations of scores by the experts and, of course, the evaluations themselves. At the same time, this connection obviously decreased from 1962 to 1980, and in the case of the "Criticisms" it became negative in 1980. Table 8 presents the Kendall coefficients of rank correlations between : (1) the General Aggregate Scores (GAS) and the Aggregate Frequency Indices (AFIs)—"Aim Declaring" and "Criticism"; (2) between Aggregate Scores (ASs) III, "Socioeconomic Transformation" (SET) and the Component Frequency Indices (CFIs), "Social Progress" and "Criticism of Socioeconomic Conditions", which form parts of the AFIs "Aim Declaring" and "Criticism" respectively.

One should also consider the connection between the said parameters in the case of the two groups of parties in distinction from this connection in the case of parties taken individually. In 1962 and 1967 all reformist parties surpassed all conservative ones both in "Aim Declaring" and in "Criticism" (diagrams 7, 8 and 10). The understandable exception is formed by CFI "Criticism

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of Political Conditions" in the case of the ruling INC ( diagram 9 ). Besides this exception, some non-coincidence of the compared ranks ( table 7 ) took place only within each of the two groups of parties ( reformist and conservative ). In particular, the SSP, which had the lowest scores on concrete issues ( GAS and other scores ) among the reformist parties, by far exceeded other such parties in "Criticism" ( diagrams 8-10 ). These circumstances possibly played a role in creating the image of the SSP as the most radical among the reformist parties.

The changes began in 1971, when some conservative parties proceeded to surpass all reformist parties either in declaring positive aims or in Criticism. In the former case, it is the INC (O), in the latter the LD ( diagrams 7-10 ). In 1980 the two present conservative parties—the BJP and the LD—surpassed two of the three reformist parties in declaring positive aims ( diagram 7 ) and all reformist parties in Criticism ( diagram 8 ). This was shown precisely by the corresponding negative rank correlations. Thus, in the course of further bourgeois development, reformism becomes more moderate, while conservatism becomes more demagogic.

It is also indicative in its own way that only the ruling INC-INC (I), along with the CPI and the CPI (M), referred, though much less frequently than the latter, to the notion of "imperialism" throughout the period under review—2 or 3 references per 10,000 words in the case of the INC-INC (I) as against the average of 8-14 in that of the CPI and the CPI (M) in various years. The PSP and the SSP also referred to this notion ( the PSP only in 1971 ) with approximately the same frequency as the INC. Meanwhile, the conservative parties, both the former ( except the Jan Singh, in 1962 ) and the present, and the present reformist ones ( JP, INC (S) ) did not refer to this notion. As regards references to colonialism, neocolonialism and racism in the manifestos of the INC-INC (I) and the opposition reformist parties, the frequency of occurrence of these notions rose in the 1962-1977 period from 8 to 10 and from 4 to 6 respectively and then in 1980 dropped in both cases to 3, i.e., below the 1962 level.

The conservative parties in the 1970-1971 period did not speak about ( neo ) colonialism and racism at all, with the only exception

of the JS manifesto exhibiting less than one reference to colonialism per 10,000 words and none to racism in 1962. Meanwhile, in 1977 the Janata Party already talked about both ( 4 references ) although much less articulately than the INC and the CFD. In 1980 the conservative parties spoke of ( neo ) colonialism and racism ( BJP 5 references and LD 3 ) not less, if not more, than the INC ( I ), and the opposition reformist parties did not refer to imperialism.

For reasons of space, the results of the frequency analysis of the references to various social class groups or categories of the population are cited below not partywise, but in averages for the non-communist parties.<sup>11</sup>

It was found that in 1977 the number of negative references to the propertied classes ( per 10,000 words ), small in itself, reached its peak ( 24 ) and the number of positive references, on the contrary, its lowest level ( 2 ), the latter referring only to "small" and "new" entrepreneurs who have always been referred to only positively by all the parties ( table 9 ). However, the sharp increase in the number of negative references to the propertied classes in 1977 was predominantly due to the increase in the number of such references to economic offenders, etc. and not to "normal" representatives of the said classes, although there was also a noticeable increase in the number of references to the "rich", in general as well as to the local monopolies ( "big industrial houses", etc. ). Incidentally, there were more negative references to the propertied classes in the manifestos ( per 10,000 words ) of the CFD ( 37 ) and the Janata Party ( 18 ) than in the manifesto of the INC ( 14 ) although the latter contained obviously more of them than before.

As a whole, it can be said that the "Criticism" of the non-communist parties with respect to the propertied classes in the 1977 election bore a much more declarative character than usual : after all, the level of the positions of political parties on concrete issues of socioeconomic transformation was virtually lower than ever. In particular, it is indicative that despite the general sharp increase in the number of negative references to the propertied classes the number of such references to the "agrarians" ( big landowners, money lenders and rich farmers ) did not increase at all, remaining in 1977 as insignificant as usual. The "agrarians" as such were

always referred to less frequently than other categories of the propertied classes as well as the foreign monopolies. Apparently, this is due to the fact that the "agrarians" represent much more numerous categories of the propertied classes compared to the other categories and exercise a much more direct influence on the very process of voting.

In 1980 the number of negative references to the propertied classes in particular, to "the rich" in general, shrank not only compared to 1977, but also compared to 1967 and 1971. However, it was greater than in 1962. This, in all probability, reflects, if inadequately, the social tension which had developed in the period under review.

The present analysis of references to various groups and categories of the working people as well as to the minorities points to important changes in the total number of such references and particularly the changes in proportion to references to such categories (table 10).

The total number of respective references in the manifestos of the non-communist parties (per 10,000 words.) at first steadily increased: from 58 in 1968 to 113 in 1977. Then it dropped to 79 in 1980 but remained much greater (by 36 per cent) than in 1962. The number of references to the working people and the minorities is in direct relation to that of negative references to the propertied classes and in inverse relation to that of positive references to the latter. The dynamics of the said indicators in their interconnection apparently reflect in a way different processes: the rising tide of social contradictions, the deepening of the reformist socioeconomic policy of the ruling party and the sharpening of the interparty struggle by 1971, then, the further exacerbation of this struggle, but already over different issues in 1977 with the flagging of the reformist policy of the INC. Hence, the intensification of the declarative character of the election propaganda. By 1980 a great deal had settled into some sort of a shape but a new one, at a new level of social contradictions. In this connection the change of the proportion of references to different groups and categories of the working people and the minorities in the sum-total of references to them appears to be fairly indicative.

First, there was a cardinal change in the ratio of references to "the people" (in general) and to "the poor" (in the latter case were summed up notions such as "the poor", "the masses", "the working people", etc.). Compared to 1962, the percentage of references to "the people" in 1980 almost halved and that of references to "the poor", almost doubled.

Second, whereas in 1962 among the concrete categories or groups of the working people (they are ranked by the proportion of relevant references, table 10) the first rank was held by the industrial workers and second by the peasants (in general), in 1980 the first rank went to "the poor peasants" and second to the scheduled castes (the harijans or former "untouchables") and the scheduled tribes (adivasis) many of whom are agricultural workers and poor peasants. The increase in the proportion of references to this category to a certain extent makes up for some shrinkage of the proportion of references to the agricultural workers as such. As a whole, it can definitely be said that in 1980 even the manifestos of the non-communist parties spoke about the poor in general and the rural poor in particular much more than about any other category of the working people.

This reflects precisely the awakening and activization of traditionally depressed sections of the working people, who comprise a big section of the population and, accordingly, play an increasing role in elections. Meanwhile, the drop in the proportion and absolute numbers (by 50 per cent in both the cases) of references to industrial workers in the manifestos of the non-communist parties should by no means be construed as the decrease of the role of the industrial workers in general (and not only as voters). In the manifestos of the CPI and the CPI (M) the absolute numbers even increased but the proportions decreased. Incidentally, the number of workers involved in industrial disputes more than doubled in the 1970s compared to the previous decade. However, the number of industrial workers in India is many times smaller than that of other working people, specially rural, the urban population being only 24 per cent in 1981. In the conditions of the activization of rural poor this determines a relative decrease in the importance of the industrial workers as voters and also a drop in precisely the importance of the white-collar employees (table 9).

Furthermore, the decrease of attention to the industrial workers and to employees ( to the latter compared to 1967 and 1971 ) in the manifestos of the present reformist parties and, consequently, on the average in the manifestos of non-communist parties in general, is probably due also to the development of the bourgeois character of the ideologies of these parties, and particularly to the withdrawal from the scene of the socialist parties, the PSP and the SSP.

Finally, mention needs to be made of the obvious increase in the proportion and absolute number of references to minorities<sup>13</sup> and specially to the "backward" classes, which form an important part of the landowning peasantry now, not infrequently accounting for a considerable part of the rural elite. This factor reflects a renewed increase of the role of communal and caste problems in the course of further bourgeois development.

Fairly specific change was exhibited by the indicator, conventionally called here "Traditionalism", which represents the sum-total of the frequencies of occurrence ( per 10,000 words ) of references to religion as ideology<sup>14</sup>, socio-historical ( age-old ) traditions and "moral and spiritual values"<sup>14</sup> ( table 11 ). The mean value of this indicator in the cases of all parties taken together has been found to be small, obviously dropping in 1977 and 1980 compared to the previous period. The frequency of positive references to these notions, which in the manifestos of the non-communist parties occurred ( on average ) much more frequently than negative, in the 1962-1980 period fell from 14 to 4 and frequency of negative references from 2 to 1. Least of all, these notions were referred to, either positively or negatively, in 1977, precisely when socioeconomic issues were relegated to the background by political issues resulting from the Emergency.

However, it appears characteristic that the positive references to the aforementioned notions occurred mainly in the manifestos of the conservative parties, whereas the negative ones mainly ( in 1962 and 1967 exclusively ) in those of the reformist parties and the communists. Positive references to religion as ideology in general occurred, only and exclusively, in the manifestos of the conservative parties—the JS-BJP ( throughout the period under review : 5 in

1971, 1 or 2 in the other years ) and the Swatantra ( 22 in 1962 and 8 in 1967, but one in 1971 ).

Whereas in the case of all the parties the average frequency of positive references to the notions constituting the FI "Traditionalism" has obviously decreased, in the case of the BJP it has, on the contrary, sharply increased ( 15 in 1980 ) compared to the corresponding frequency of references in the case of the Jan Sangh ( 7 in 1962, 2 in 1967 and 10 in 1971 ), and in the case of the Lok Dal the frequency remained the same as it was in that of the BKD. At the same time, already in 1971 and subsequently in 1980 the JS-BJP and the BKD-LD also referred negatively to some traditions ( 3 and 2 references in 1971 and 1 and 4 in 1980 respectively ), whereas the INC (I) and the opposition reformist parties made no negative references and the JP made one positive reference to traditions. Presumably, these data show both an increase of traditionalist appeal, above all precisely in the manifestos of the conservative parties, and a tendency, so to speak, to modernize traditionalism. Finally, it is worth noting that in the case of the INC-INC (I) the frequencies of the corresponding positive and negative references are found to be either balanced or absent.

### Conclusions

In the course of bourgeois transformation of the society inherited from the colonial-feudal past bourgeois reformism first developed and then proceeded to decrease its socio-transformatory role, particularly in the sphere of property relations, which may be compared to the evolution of the classical bourgeois revolutionism of the past.

The intensifying bourgeois reformist policy has been reflected first in the interests of the relatively wide and growing non-monopoly sections of bourgeois as well as the national interests and requirements of developments, in contrast to the sectional interests of the monopoly ( big business ) and landlord-elite of the propertied classes and the neo-colonialist imperialist circles. This policy provided, in particular, for an accelerated development of the public sector, including the selective nationalization of industries and enterprises from among those owned by the local and foreign monopolies, the removal,

albeit incomplete, of traditional privileges of the former feudal aristocracy and the partial redistribution of land in favour of rural poor. Passing its peak, the bourgeois reformist policy has reduced its former measures (some have been renounced) affecting the property relations, because these relations more often than not have largely assumed a bourgeois character, although, not infrequently, they are burdened by survivals of the colonial-feudal past.

The state property, particularly the public sector, appears to have reached a scope which more or less corresponds to the present requirements of a capitalist mixed economy. This leads to a declaration of growth of the public sector. Under these conditions measures to end the shackling forms of exploitation related mostly to the conditions of labour hire and a certain state capitalist regulation for speeding up economic growth and relieving social contradictions, including those between the propertied groups and other measures aimed at modernization, but without transformation of property relations, have become the essence of bourgeois-reformist policy.

However, inasmuch as this policy pursues the independent national development and resistance to neo-colonialism and inasmuch as this policy facilitates the overcoming of traditional social oppression and bondage, affirms secularism and opposes communalism, bourgeois reformism of this stamp continues to play a positive role in the country's development. With the socio-political process, exhibiting some cyclic recurrence, the possibility of a certain new rise of bourgeois-reformist policy is not ruled out. However, it can hardly be too high. Otherwise, this policy would cease to be bourgeois.

A noticeable evolution of conservatism was also registered. Originally, the conservative parties and, to a certain extent, the conservative forces within the ruling reformist party itself, represented opposition to social transformation predominantly on the part of those groups and strata which, in the main, had formed the upper crust of the propertied classes by the advent of independence. Primarily, these were the former princely and landlord aristocracy, commercial-usurious groups, some other traditionally privileged elements of the former social structure. These were also big

commercial and industrial houses which had sprung up long before independence and subsequently resisted limitations on the economic power of the growing big business resulting from the rise and expansion of the public sector and economic regulation. Since the INC government pursued precisely a reformist policy in the conditions of the one-party dominance of the INC, conservative type parties prevailed in the non-communist opposition (in any case at the national level).

As the INC's reformist policy grew deeper in the atmosphere of an increasing social tension, conservative forces both within and without the INC also increasingly represented certain common interests of the propertied classes in preventing the policy of the ruling party from going beyond the framework of bourgeois interests, and thus of those of the propertied classes in general. Therefore, during the development of the reformist policy of the INC, in the early 1970s, the conservative forces and parties which enjoyed the support of the major capitalist power succeeded in organizing a violent anti-government campaign (including serious disturbances in some states), and later came to power for a brief period in the 1977-1979 period. It was furthered by the consequences of the Emergency.

In the course of these events, which accompanied bourgeois social transformation and development (including the growing "bourgeoification" of the former colonial-feudal groups of the propertied classes), some sort of modernization of conservatism took place. The role of the conservative parties and forces evolved from outward resistance to modern bourgeois reformism with a state capitalist policy as its spearhead to the limitation of bourgeois-reformist policy and its subordination to the interests of the strongest, now predominantly bourgeois propertied groups, which, however, exhibited complex relations of conflict and compromise. These are, above all, the big business which had adapted itself to the broad state-capitalist policy striving to make it serve their interests. That is also the kulak-landlord elite, which once to varying extents, had opposed the feudal-landlord aristocracy and now had largely replaced it as a dominant rural power, but still uses shackling forms of exploitation of the poor and opposes their removal. In an effort to enlist the support of larger sections of the population, the present

conservative parties talked much more about the poor than in the previous period and strove to exploit the social contradictions ( in particular, caste, communal and regional ) generated by further bourgeois development in a multistructural society.

At the same time, a certain narrowing of differences between the positions of the bourgeois-reformist and conservative parties by 1977-1980 appears to be important evidence of the development of precisely the bourgeois party structure, as an essential component of the bourgeois-parliamentary political set up.

Meanwhile, the political struggle of the 1960s and the 1970s was by far not limited to confrontation between the bourgeois-reformist and conservative forces and parties, although in the majority of states they were the main adversaries. Under the conditions of the present times in the process of overcoming of the colonial-feudal inheritance, and through the related political struggles, unprecedented material as well as social prerequisites are created for the socialist-oriented development. Therefore, issues of the rise and growth of the public sector became the key issue of political struggle alongside the issues of foreign policy and agrarian transformation. This situation has determined both the character of mounting opposition of the conservative forces and parties to the deepening reformist policy of the ruling INC and the evolution of the positions of the communists in the elections of the 1970s.

Just as the Communist Party of India ( CPI ), which practised a certain measure of cooperation with the ruling INC particularly in parliamentary elections and in elections to the legislative assemblies of a number of states in the early 1970s, the Communist Party of India ( Marxist ), which confronted with the INC and in those years also with the CPI ( although it also supported the minority government after the split of the ruling party in 1969 and the candidate nominated by the ruling INC for the fairly important presidential election of 1970 ), modified their stands on a number of concrete socioeconomic issues in their election manifestos of 1971. As a result, in this election the positions of both the CPI and the CPI ( M ) drew closer, although to different degrees, to those of the INC, which had by then become radicalized, whereas the

differences between the positions of the latter and those of all the other non-communist parties had actually widened.

Thus, according to the analysis based on the procedure described above the General Aggregate Score (GAS) of the CPI dropped from 464 in 1967 to 233 in 1971 and that of the CPI (M) from 536 to 306. At that time—in 1971—the GAS of the INC rose to 189 whereas that of the PSP, a non-communist party, "closest" to the INC was only 66, i. e. about one-third of the GAS of the INC. The GASs of the CPI and the CPI (M) being unequal in 1967, the magnitude of the change of this index by 1971 in the cases of both parties is found to be virtually equal—239 in the case of the CPI and 230 in the case of the CPI (M). Apparently, this points to the objective character of the very change of positions of the two parties, due obviously to the change of the socio-political situation. It appears that the closer positions of the communists with the radicalized positions of the INC and the CPI-INC cooperation directed against the rightist opposition in the early 1970s furthered India's progress. That was when perceptibly more radical laws and measures were adopted in the field of socioeconomic transformation (the further development of the public sector, including selective nationalization, the lowering of the ceiling on landholdings) than before. As laws of the land, these laws have a perspective significance.

The further drop of the GASs of the CPI and the CPI (M) in 1977 (to 88 and 144 respectively) proceeded already not against the background of the growth of the GAS of the INC, as in 1971, but on the contrary, against that of its essential drop—to 62. Although the Janata Party's GAS was only 37, the drop of the GAS of the INC in 1977 pointed to the greatest all-time convergence of the positions of the INC and the non-communist opposition dominated by the conservative parties. In the 1977 elections the CPI still had electoral agreements with the INC, although on a smaller scale than in 1971, while the CPI (M) had such agreements with the Janata Party aimed at resisting "authoritarianism". Presumably, the fall of the GASs this time both of the CPI and of the CPI (M), on the one hand, and of the INC, on the other, reflected in its own way a conservative political shift in the country which had shown itself during the Emergency and subsequently in the Janata Party winning the 1977 elections.

However, the next parliamentary elections held in 1980 were won by the INC (I) precisely as a reformist party, although one that had undergone a certain evolution. Back in 1977 in the states of West Bengal and Tripura Left Front governments had been formed led by the CPI (M), which scored further victories in the elections to the legislative assemblies of these states in 1982 and 1983 respectively. In the state of Kerala, the left parties had repeatedly won elections to the assembly since the 1950s, but the 1982 assembly elections were won with minimal lead by a coalition of parties headed by the INC (I).

The positions of the CPI and the CPI (M) on concrete socio-economic issues have been qualitatively different from those of all bourgeois parties in spite of a certain narrowing of the distance between the positions of the communists and those of the INC in 1971 and 1977 elections. In 1980 the distance in scores from the CPI or the CPI (M) to the "nearest" bourgeois party again exceeded several times the distance between any two bourgeois parties. In 1980, the GAS of the CPI was 429 (364 in 1962 and 464 in 1967) and that of the CPI (M) was 276 (503 in 1967). The CPI (M)'s 1980 position might have been influenced, in particular, by the fact that it had led the state governments in West Bengal and Tripura since 1977 and in Kerala in the 1979-1982 period.

It should also be noted that the indices obtained by the frequency analysis, as a rule, showed little change in the cases of the CPI and the CPI (M) throughout the period under review. Here these two parties were, and are, invariably and essentially different from the others, above all, by greater criticism both with respect of existing conditions in general and with respect to the propertied classes directly. Their indices of criticism exceeded several times the respective ones of any non-communist party.

A kind of "restoration" of the qualitative differences between the positions of the CPI and the CPI (M) on concrete issues as declared in their election manifestos from those of the bourgeois-reformist parties is not at all tantamount to a reversion to the previous situation in India. On the contrary, it reflects in its own way the advent of a new stage, which is different from the entire previous period since independence by a relatively higher level of development

of bourgeois relations in general and of political development in particular—above all, by the much greater activity of the working people, including the rural poor. Alongside this, India's positive experience indicates the possibility of advance of a newly liberated country on the path of national independence under a parliamentary democracy accumulating popular forces for further social progress and consolidating democratic traditions.

#### TABLES

Table 1 Overall Evolution of Positions of Political Parties : Issues of Socioeconomic and Political Development—General Aggregate Scores (GASs).

Election Year	INC-INC (I) ( GASs )	Opposition Parties ( Average GASs )	
		Reformist Parties	Conservative Parties
1962	68	52	- 60
1967	71	92	- 101
1971	189	59	14
1977	62	90	37
1980	60	73	6

Table 2 Evolution of Positions of Political Parties : Issues of Socioeconomic Transformation and Issues of Public Property and Joint Farming—Aggregate Scores (ASs)

Election Year	ASs—"Socioeconomic Transformation"		ASs—"Public Property and Joint Farming"			
	INC-INC (I) ( ASs )	Opposition Parties ( average ASs )	INC-INC (I) ( ASs )	Opposition Parties ( average ASs )		
		Reformist Parties	Conservative Parties	Reformist Parties	Conservative Parties	
1962	48	43	- 62	44	24	- 64
1967	47	82	- 47	25	76	- 45
1971	135	50	10	94	28	- 26
1977	38	35	20	15	7	- 5
1980	27	46	- 6	7	14	- 7

Table 3 Evolution of Positions of Political Parties :  
 Issues of Ceiling on Landholding and Protection of  
 Tenants and Issues of Overcoming Shackling  
 Forms of Exploitation of Rural Poor—  
 Aggregate Scores (ASs)

Election Year	Ceiling on Landholding and Protection of Tenants			Measures to Overcome Shackling Forms of Exploitation of Rural Poor		
	INC- Opposition Parties		INC- Opposition Parties	INC- Opposition Parties		
	INC (I) ( average ASs )	(ASs)	INC (I) ( average ASs )	(ASs)	Reformist Parties	Conservative Parties
	Reformist Parties	Conservative Parties			Reformist Parties	Conservative Parties
1962	4	15	0 (+1, -1)	0	4	2
1967	18	16	7	5	5	6
1971	28	14	10	0	0	4
1977	5	5	5	15	12	11
1980	5	24	13	15	8	2

Table 4 Evolution of Positions of Political Parties :  
 Directly Unconnected with Socioeconomic Trans-  
 formation ( “Remaining Issues” )—  
 Aggregate Scores (ASs)

Election Year	INC-INC (I) ( ASs )	Opposition Parties ( Average ASs )	
		Reformist Parties	Conservative Parties
1962	39	17	4
1967	46	1	- 106
1971	108	17	- 3
1977	46	110	34
1980	67	54	27

Table 5 "Aim Declaring" and "Criticism"—Aggregate Frequency Indices (AFIs)

Election Year	INC-INC (I) ( AFIs )		Opposition Parties ( Average AFIs )			
	"Aim Dec- laring"	"Criti- cism"	"Aim Dec- laring"	"Criti- cism"	"Aim Dec- laring"	"Criti- cism"
1962	88	44	65	55	12	10
1967	56	37	45	55	22	15
1971	77	45	61	62	44	40
1977	113	68	77	127	38	109
1980	40	39	36	25	30	66

( The frequencies of occurrence per 10,000 words calculated )

Table 6 Component Frequency Indices (CFIs) :  
"Democracy", "Criticism of Political  
Conditions"

Election Year	INC-INC (I) ( CFIs )		Opposition Parties ( Average CFIs )			
	"Demo- cracy"	"Criticism of politi- cal condi- tions"	"Demo- cracy"	"Criticism of politi- cal condi- tions"	"Demo- cracy"	"Criticism of politi- cal condi- tions"
1962	3	0	25	0	5	3
1967	5	0	5	13	8	12
1971	16	2	13	9	20	12
1977	27	4	24	70	14	52
1980	6	3	8	12	12	15

Table 7 Mean Values and Standard Deviation of (AFIs) :  
"Aim declaring" and "Criticism"

Election Year	"Aim Declaring"		"Criticism"	
	Mean value	Standard deviation	Mean value	Standard deviation
1962	42	35	26	17
1967	37	15	26	16
1971	54	23	30	11
1977	76	31	62	10
1980	34	14	25	12

Table 8 Rank Correlations of Scores and  
Frequency Indices

Election Year	General Aggregate Score (GAS) - "Aim Declaring"	General Aggregate Score (GAS) - "Criticism"	"Socio- economic Transformation" CFI Social Progress	"Socio- economic Transformation" - CFI Criticism of Socioeconomic Conditions
1962	0.80	0.40	0.83	0.67
1967	0.70	0.60	0.60	0.60
1971	0.71	0.24	0.81	0.14
1977	0.33	0.33	0.67	0.33
1980	0.22	- 1.00	0.60	- 0.80

Table 9 Propertied Classes : Combined Frequencies of Reference per 10,000 Words

Election Year	All Categories of Propertied Classes	NEGATIVE REFERENCES						POSITIVE REFERENCES	
		The Rich (In General)	Foreign Monopolies	Local Monopolies	"Agrarians" (Land-lords, Money-lenders, Rich Farmers)	Economic Offenders	"Small" and "New" Entrepreneurs <sup>1</sup>	All Categories of propertied Classes	
1962	5	2	0.2*	2	1	0	3	5	
1967	10	5	1	2	2	0.4	1	6	
1971	10	3	1	2	1	2	1	3	
1977	24	6	1	4	1	12	2	2	
1980	8	2	1	2	1	2	2	3	

1 "Small and new entrepreneurs" referred to in the manifestos only positively.

2 The frequencies are rounded off to a unit except when the frequency is below 0.5.

Table 10 "People", "Working People" ("Masses", "Poor") "Minorities": Average Frequencies of References to Categories In Percentage to the Total ( All Categories ) and Corresponding Ranks of Categories

Election Year	All Categories (per 10,000 words)	People (in general)	The Poor, Masses (in general)	Industrial workers (in general)	Peasants (in general)	Poor Peasantants	Agricultural Labourers	Harijans	"Tribes" (SC, ST)	Employees, Intelligentsia	Students, Youth	"Backward" castes or classes	Moritories
1962	58	16	7	1 19	2 14	6 3	3 9	4 7	3 9	6 3	5 5	5 5	3 9
1967	87	31	9	2 11	3 7	6 2	3 7	4 6	1 17	5 5	6 2	6 2	
1971	100	23	12	2 10	3 8	3 8	6 4	4 7	1 12	5 6	6 4	5 6	
1977	113	13	24	2 12	3 7	8 2	6 4	1 16	5 6	5 6	7 3	4 8	
1980	79	9	18	4 8	5 6	1 14	6 5	2 10	4 8	5 6	3 9	4 8	

1 R = rank

Table 11 "Religion", "Ancient Traditions", "Moral and Spiritual Values": Combined Frequencies of Occurrence of References per 10,000 Words<sup>1</sup> (For Groups of Parties—On Average)

Election Year	Positive References				Negative References			
	All Non-Communist Parties*	INC-INC (I)	Opposition Parties	CPI-CPI (M)	All Non-Communist Parties	INC-INC (I)	Opposition Parties	CPI-CPI (M)
1962	14	7	23	4	0	2	7	0
1967	5	0	1	2	0	2	0	0
1971	3	2	5	0	0	2	2	1
1977	2	2	3	0	0	1	2	0
1980	4	0	9	0.3	0	1	0	3
							0	1

1 The frequencies are rounded off to whole number except when they are 0.5 or less than 0.5.

2 These average frequencies cannot be equal to the sum of the average frequencies found in groups of parties due to the different numbers of parties in the groups.

## DIAGRAMS



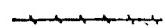
INC-INC (I)



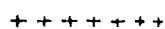
CPI



CPI (M)



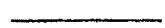
PSP



SSP



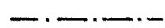
JS-BJP



Sw



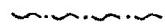
INC (O)



BKD-LD



JP-77



JP-80

Indicator of the origin of the parties  
which arose from party splits

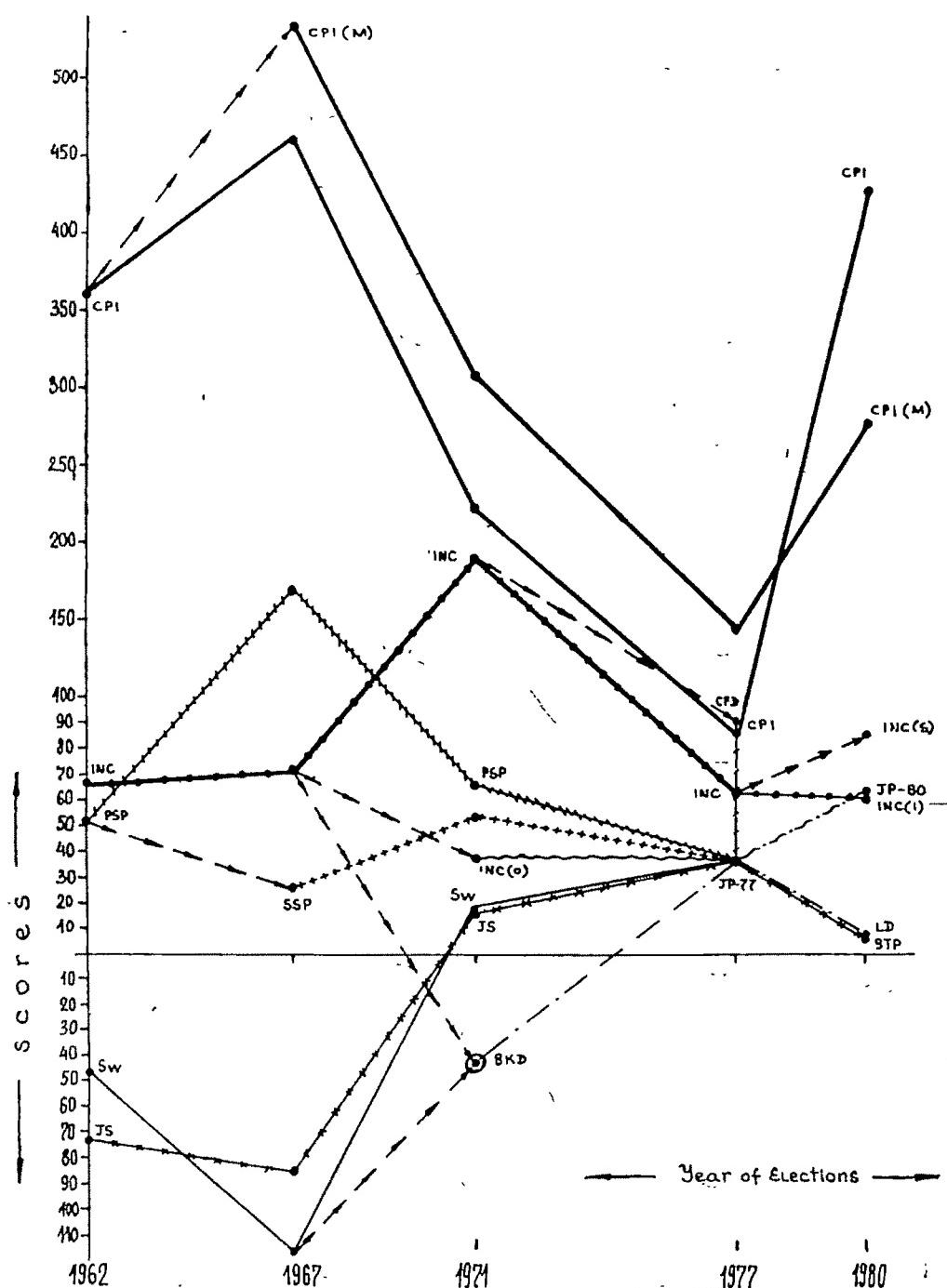


Diagram 1 Overall Evolution of Positions of Political Parties on Issues of Socioeconomic and Political Development (General Aggregate Scores—GASs)

POLITICAL PARTIES IN INDIA

4

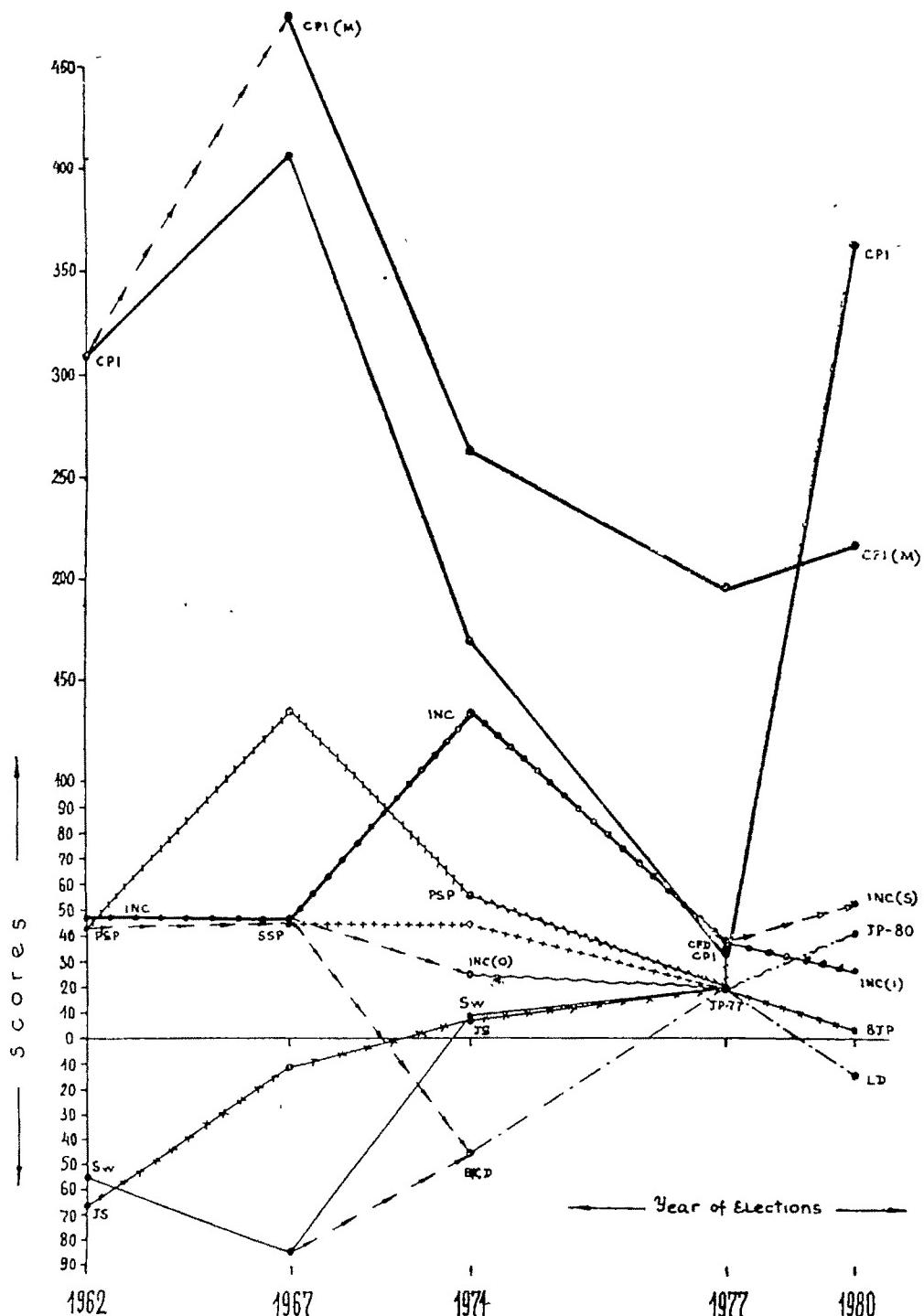


Diagram 2 Evolution of Positions of Political Parties on Issues of Socioeconomic Transformation (Aggregate Scores—ASs)

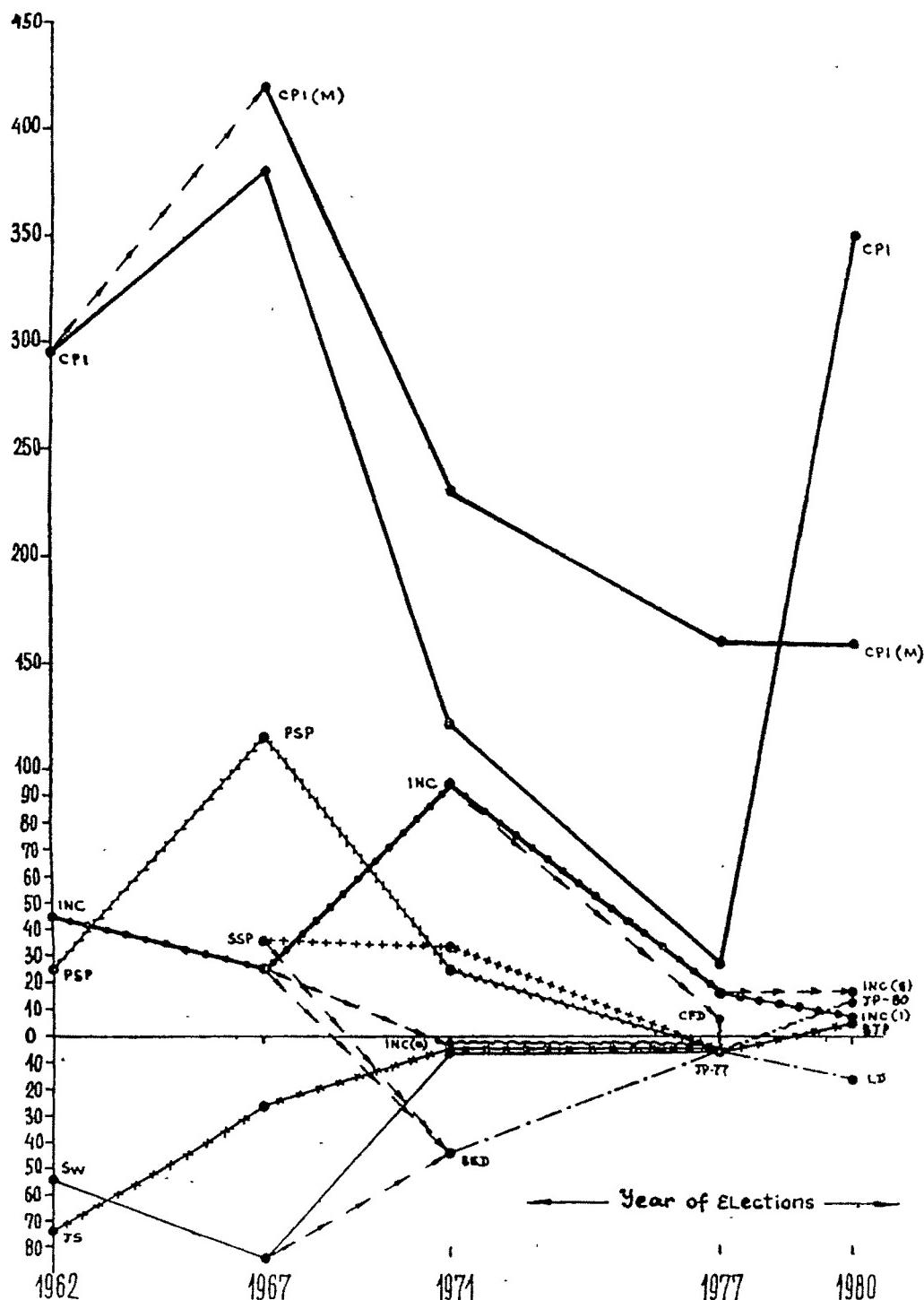


Diagram 3 Evolution of Positions of Political Parties on Issues Relating to Public Property and Joint Farming (ASes)

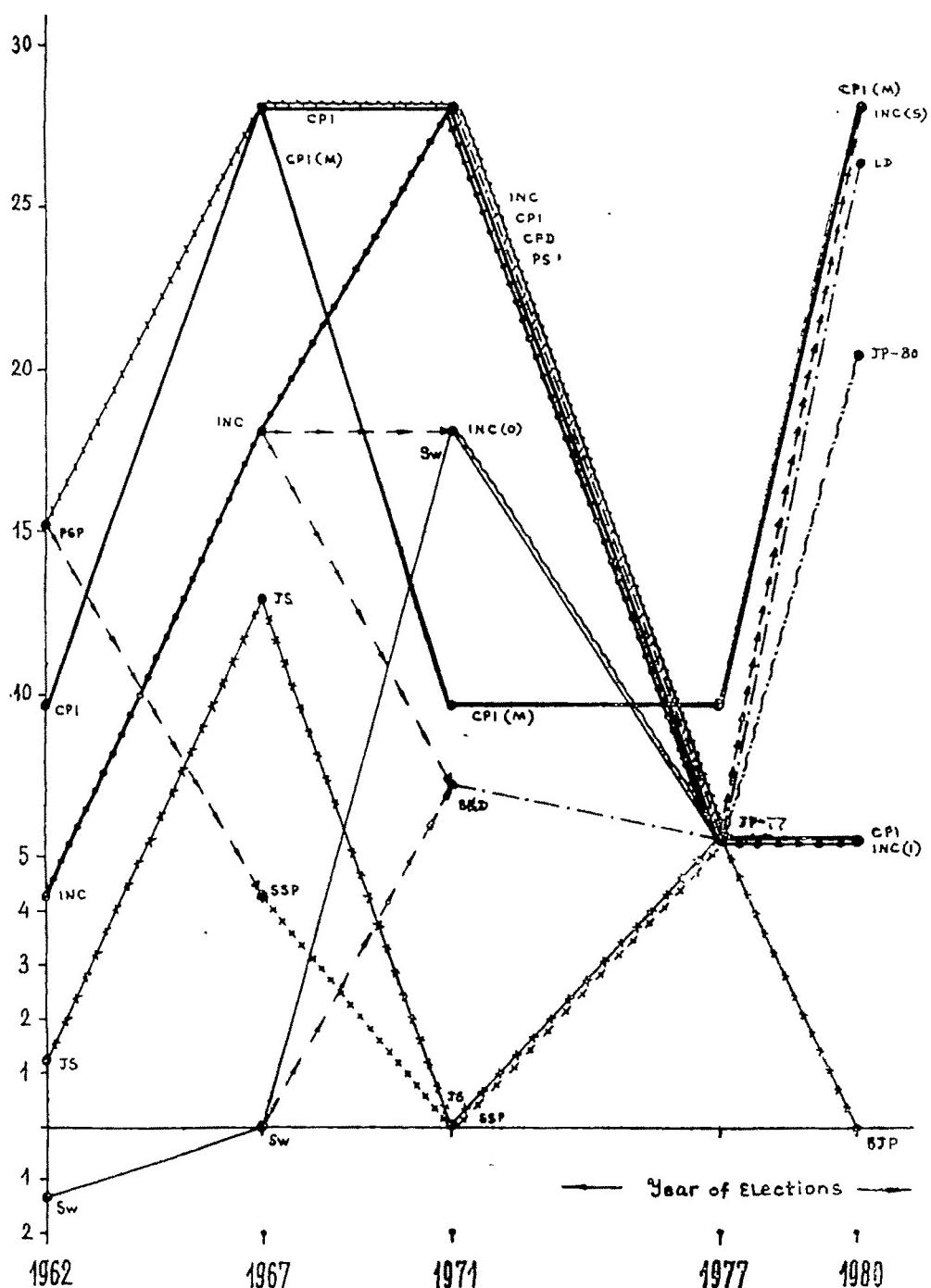


Diagram 4 Evolution of Positions of Political Parties on Issues of Ceiling on Landholding and Protection of Tenants (ASs)

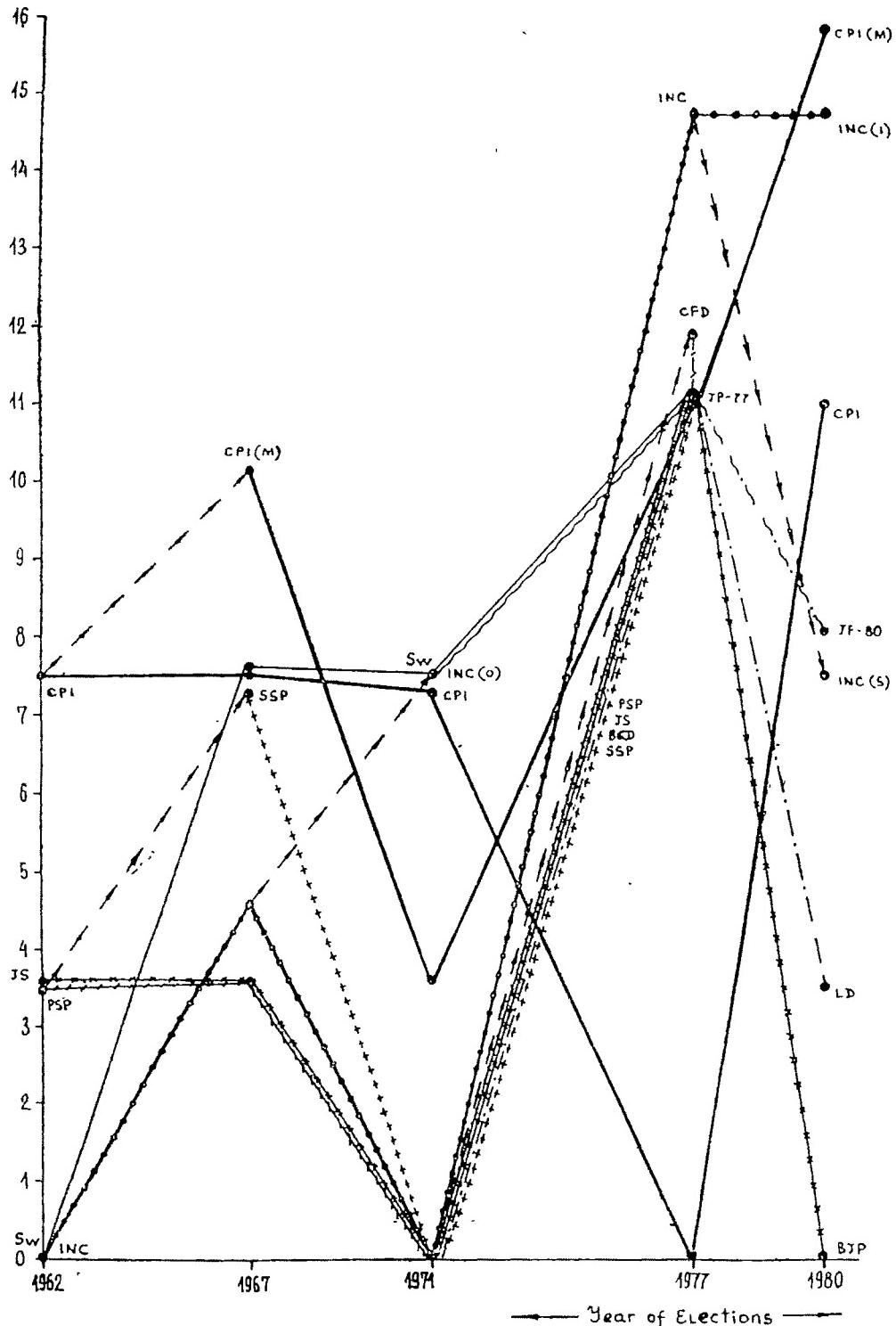


Diagram 5 Evolution of Positions of Political Parties on Measures for Overcoming of Shackling Forms of Exploitation of the Rural Poor (ASs)

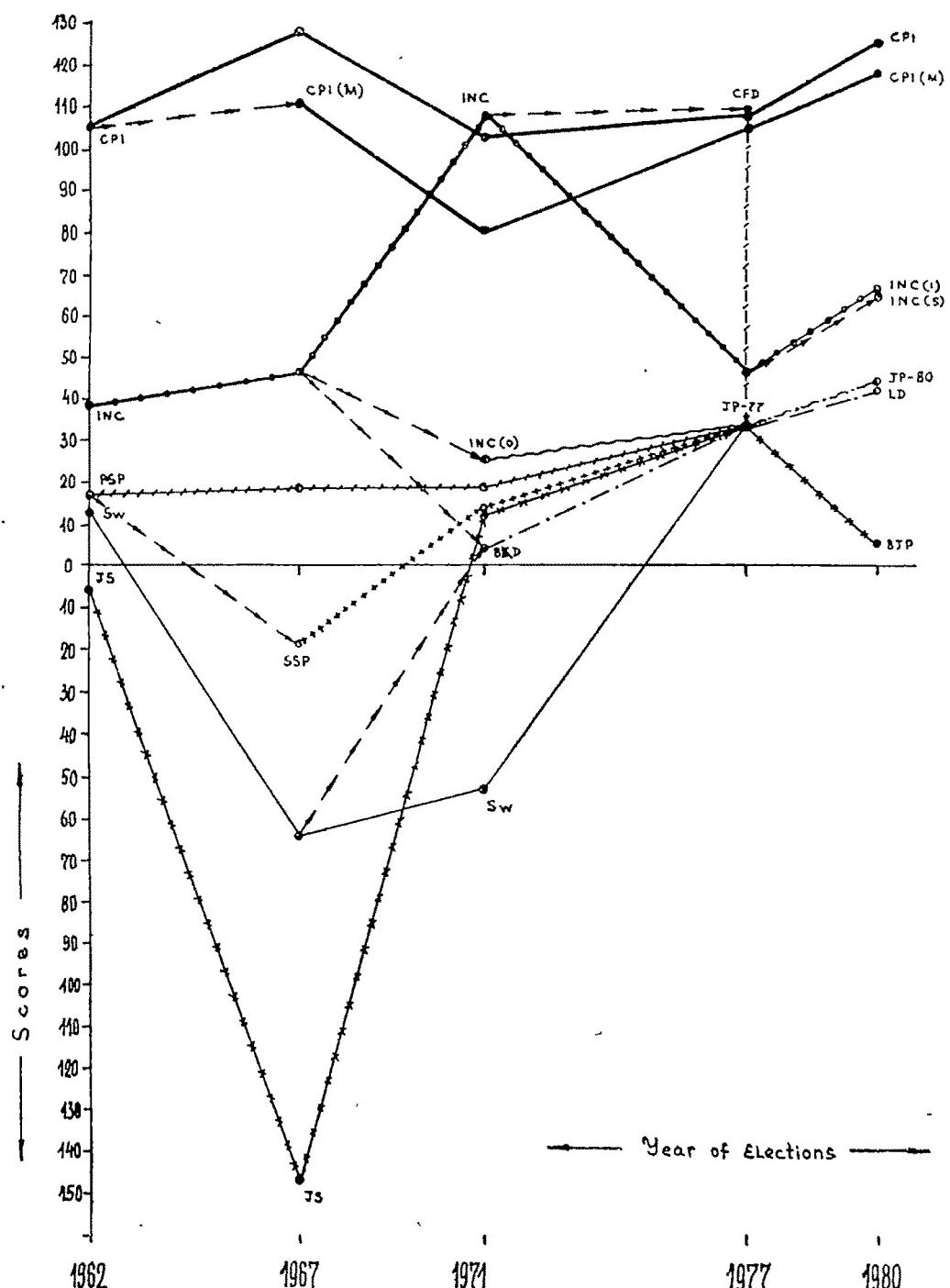


Diagram 6 Evolution of Positions of Political Parties on Issues Directly Unconnected with Socioeconomic Transformation — "Remaining Issues" (ASs)

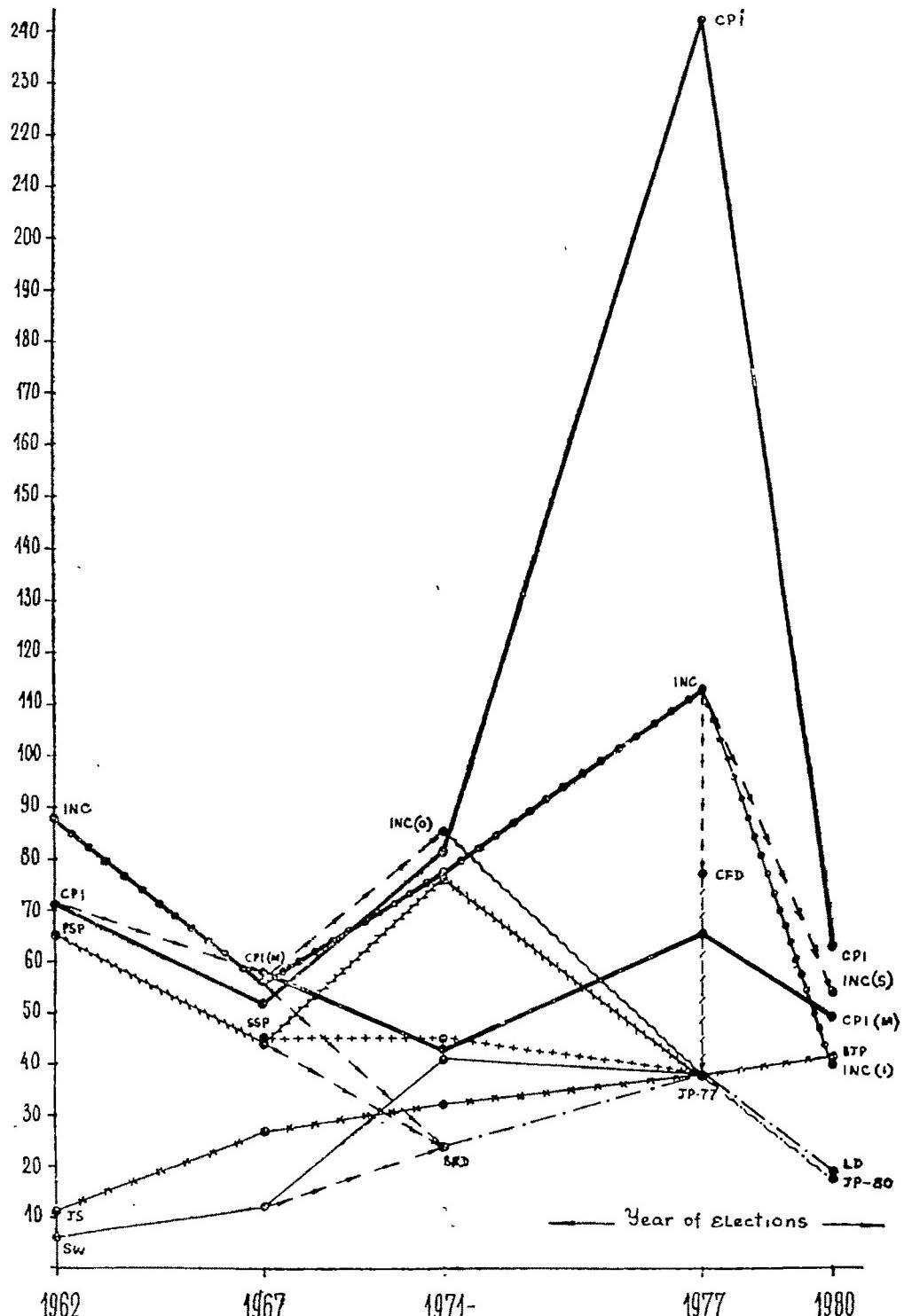


Diagram 7 Aim Declaring ( Aggregate Frequency Indices—AFIs )

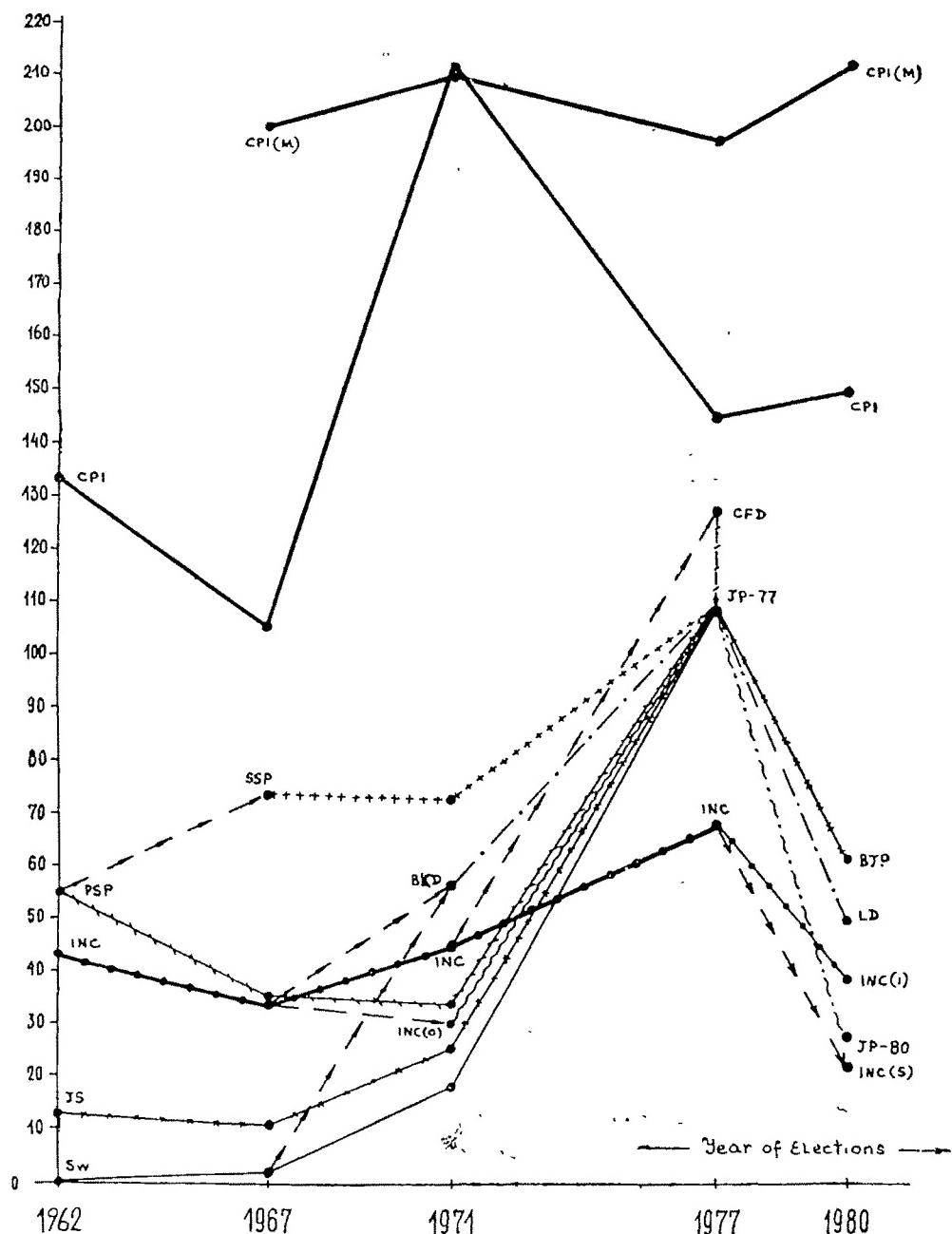


Diagram 8 Criticism (AFIs)

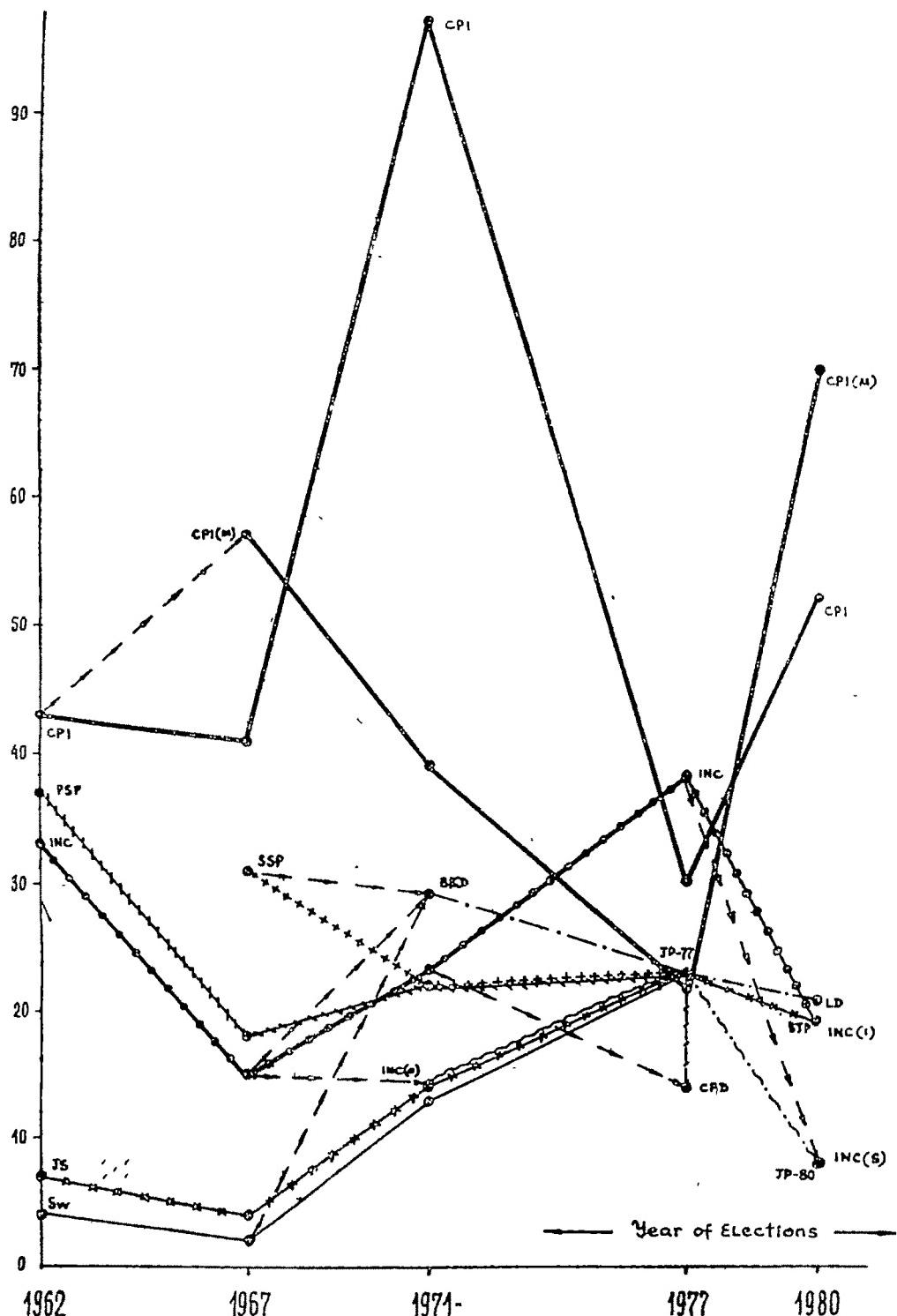


Diagram 9 Criticism of Socioeconomic Conditions ( Component Frequency Index — CFI )

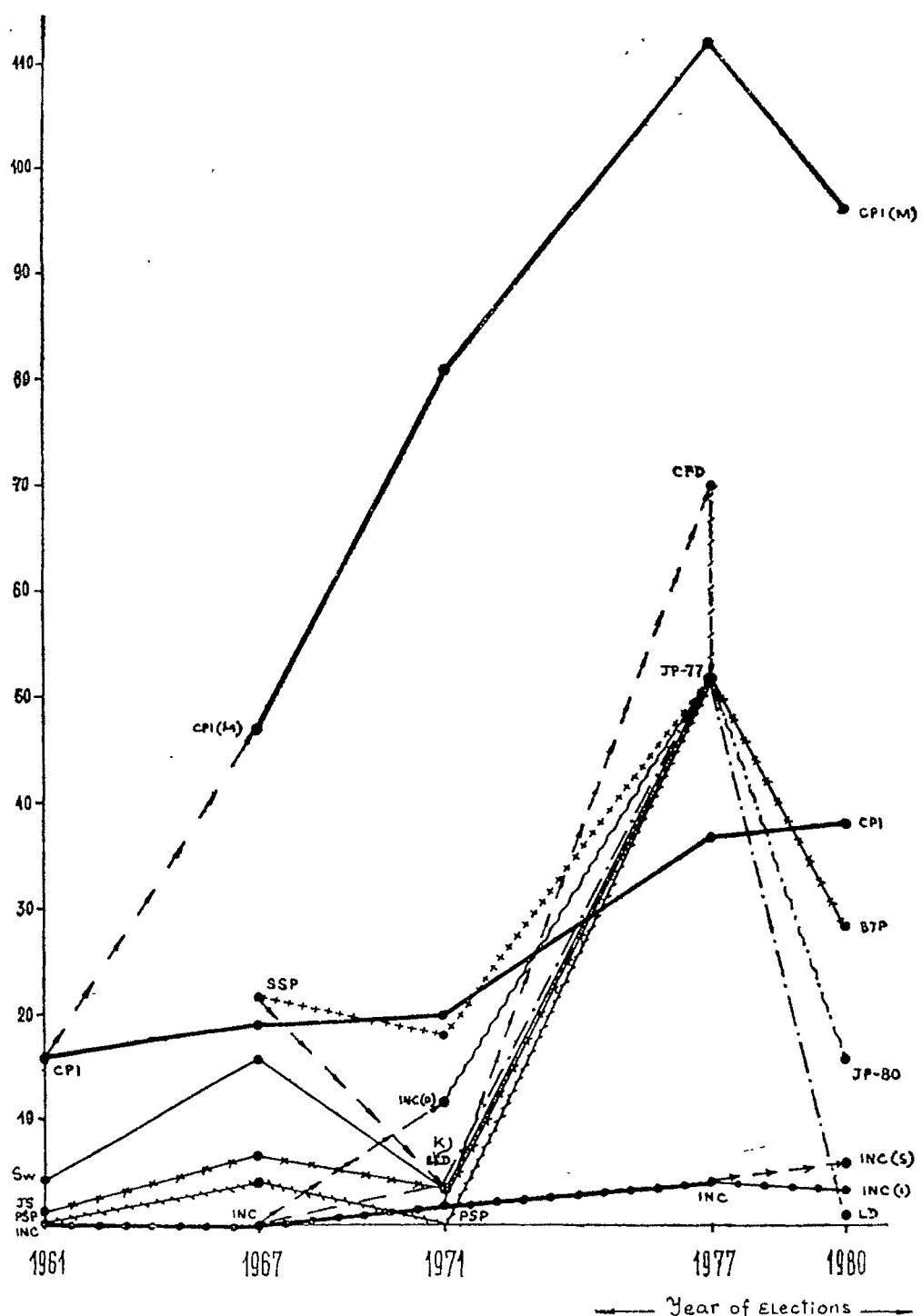


Diagram 10 Criticism of Political Conditions (CPI)

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

- 1 The author is indebted to his young colleagues Dr A G Voldin and Yu. V Lyubimov for joining him in the labour-consuming coding of texts as well as to Dr A Ye. Granovsky and Prof. L A Fridman for valuable consultations.
- 2 Most of these 15 parties participated in all the five elections held in the 1962-1980 period and some of them participated in only one election. In each individual election of the period under review 4-9 parties recognized as national parties participated. They polled a total of 75-85 per cent of the votes.
- 3 The experts were members of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences and the Institute of the Countries of Asia and Africa, Moscow University.
- 4 The fractions were rounded off to units.
- 5 In brackets next to the party's abbreviated name is given the period when it participated in the elections or, the year in case it participated in one election only.
- 6 The Janata Party, which figures in the 1980 elections, was a formation different from that which fought the 1977 elections. Nevertheless, during the 1980 elections it also included the conservative party—Jan Sangh, which opted out of it shortly after the elections adopting a new name, the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP).
- 7 In the present paper use is made of the findings of the content analysis of a document entitled *Our Five Commitments, Basic Policy Statement of Bhartiya Janata Party*. This statement, although issued after the 1980 elections, in terms of character and volume, is more or less comparable to an election manifesto.
- 8 The Janata Party of 1977 was formed by the JS, INC (O), BKD (including some leaders of the disintegrated Swatantra Party) and the Socialist Party (formed as a result of merger of the SSP and the PSP after the 1971 elections) and was joined by the CFD after the 1977 elections. This formation had a common manifesto and was recognized as a party.
- 9 The Lok Dal, which participated in the 1980 elections, had been formed as a result of the withdrawal of the BKD and a number of leaders of the former SSP from the Janata Party in 1979.
- 10 The INC positions on five issues out of the aforementioned total of 81 as adopted in the early 1970s has been analysed not on the basis of the party's manifesto of the 1971 parliamentary elections, but on its manifesto for the elections to the legislative assemblies of the states in 1972, because the latter presented more radical positions on these issues than the former. These are issues from among those which form special

groups—Nos. 1, 3, 5, and 15. The INC positions on all the 76 remaining issues have been considered on the basis of its manifesto of 1971. It is this year which is indicated in the diagrams and tables.

- 11 A partywise analysis shows the same regularities as other aforementioned indices. For instance, if one were to omit references to the "small" or "new" entrepreneurs which are referred to only positively by all parties, the positive references to other categories of the propertied classes occur almost exclusively in the manifestos of the conservative parties. In those of the INC-INC (!) no positive references to them occur at all. At the same time among the conservative parties the number of such positive references in 1980 decreased, whereas that of negative ones remained at the previous level or even slightly increased, which corresponds to the dynamics of the aforementioned indicator "criticism".
- 12 Usually, the religious minorities, specially the muslims, are implied.
- 13 References to concept of "religion" without the context of problems of the religious minorities.
- 14 The references to these values which have occurred bore the character of moralistic preaching or calling for "moral and religious education".

## MARX'S VISION OF HISTORY AND THE PRESENT-DAY PROBLEMS OF THE THIRD WORLD

BAREN RAY

PERHAPS IT WILL not be an exaggeration to say that compared to any other branch of marxian study the one concerning the interaction between marxian theory and studies on the non-European world seems both promising and pregnant as well as most urgent in the contemporary context. This of course is most appropriate because without fully comprehending the theoretical issues relating to the marxian problematic of the non-European world, we shall not understand the problem of underdevelopment in these societal formations. Thus as theory and praxis are for ever so inseparably united in Marx, our discussion too must rightly seek to underline from the very beginning the inseparable interconnection between the most urgent socioeconomic problems facing humanity today, namely, economic underdevelopment over vast areas across the globe and the consequent wretchedness of millions upon millions of people, on the one hand, and what may be considered a very abstruse theory of societal formations and Marx's vision of history, on the other.

Marx's own concept of the Asiatic Mode of Production is of course central to his vision of history. In spite of the temporary eclipse for over four decades of the theory of the AMP among many marxists, the last two decades have witnessed a great flood of new studies and discussions on this subject among marxist scholars all over the world. Thanks most particularly to the translation of the *Grundrisse* and the availability of other hitherto unpublished material from the works of Marx and Engels, a great deal of fresh textual studies of the entire works have been presented and this in its turn has made it possible to have a more comprehensive overview of the whole range of the historical writings of Marx. The significance of the concept of the Asiatic Mode of Production in the whole thought

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system of marxism has been so much stressed in this recent scholarship that the story of the revival of this theory is itself dramatized in the very title of some of the studies, for example *The Fall and Rise of the Asiatic Mode of Production* !

The detractors of AMP concept had mainly caught on two or three points : first, that this view perceives eastern societies as changeless and static ; second, that Marx had accepted that there was a total absence of private property in land to which mainly, according to them, Marx had attributed the alleged arrest in social evolution. On the basis of greater information available subsequently compared to in Marx's time, they showed that eastern societies from India to Peru and from China to north Africa were indeed varied and that over the two or four millenia of their existence they did undergo many important changes. Also that there were some forms of private property in land over certain periods in different countries and that the rules of property changed over the centuries. Having thus 'demolished' what they believed were the two basic assumptions of the AMP theory, they further held that capitalist or proto-capitalist developments were actually in the process of taking place in some of the eastern societies when they were interrupted by the process of colonization by the European powers. That was the dominant view till perhaps about 15 years ago when the wheel began to turn again.

In view of the limitations of space it will not be possible in this paper either to present the views of different scholars nor to attempt to defend or oppose any of them in particular. We shall seek to present a composite view even at the risk of being seen to be eclectic. As for the historical premises of the transition to capitalism by any one or the other of eastern societies, perhaps we can definitely say today that no satisfactory evidence has been presented for any of them. ( About India, we have the works of Irfan Habib and V I Pavlov coming to the same conclusion ). With all this the multilinear preception of the pre-capitalist society in the eastern countries has gained ground as it provided a more satisfactory framework of analysis than the unilinear scheme previously held by marxists.

In the multilinear scheme there is no need of any absolute stagnation of the Asiatic formation. Eastern societies indeed could have

been changing and varying greatly from country to country. But having passed through different concrete paths during which there would have been many technological innovations as well as social changes they would arrive at a mature pre-capitalist stage. But what is a mature pre-capitalist stage ? Pre-capitalist is of course a negative definition. The societies in all these countries will vastly differ from each other in numerous respects except about that which did not take place in any of them. That which did not take place, had not taken place anywhere and in a sense that was the only aspect common between them. Over many centuries, at different points of history in different countries it had seemed as if the commercial elements or some other urban producer groups were on the ascendance. But the situation was soon reversed and the overall milieu with its hierarchical structure wielded a degree of stability which was found difficult to shake and such would-be proto-bourgeois classes were found to be exchanging their wealth acquired through long-distance commerce or any other means for gaining entrance and position in the hierarchical society itself thereby further strengthening it and not challenging it.

The term pre-capitalist is not a descriptive definition. It only refers to their common inability for a certain transformation which was totally unknown to them in any case. Pre-capitalism therefore was a common upper limit for all mankind, a barrier at which all had to wait no matter when and how early this or that society had reached it. Having arrived they may undergo many surface mutations, there may be efflorescence of this or that cultural or other developments except that vital breakthrough by a hitherto neglected class that will make a fundamental structural transformation. As we know such a breakthrough took place quietly, over rather small areas, not in the seat of any of the great civilizations, but where civilization had come ( by the Gordon-Childe definition of the term ) rather recently compared to the millenial history of mankind. It took place in parts of England and Flanders neither of which was a great power even in the European context. It is of course natural that such a breakthrough would take place in a society whose structural stability is comparatively lower and weaker and where the early strivings by the nascent new class would not be smothered by the societal-structural factors. But we shall come back to the unique factors in the European background in a little while.

Shortly the germs of this superior dynamism were carried to the shores of the eastern countries by the European adventurers. Of course the character and the motivation of the *carriers* will mark their own stamp on the nature of the changes that would be caused and brought about by these germs on the host body. But that is a well-known story about colonialism. For the eastern countries then for progress towards industrialization from the pre-capitalist pre-industrial state there would be two stages : first, that in which progress towards industrialization is dependent on the dissolution of communal forms of economy in favour of private ownership. According to Marx's formulation, non-European socioeconomic formations were incapable of developing towards industrialization without a fundamental structural change. For Marx, at first, industrialization was synonymous with capitalism, and hence he tended to view history in terms of the creation of the pre-conditions of capitalism i.e., increasing individuation. It was in this context that Marx had spoken of British imperialism having carried out the first real revolution in India. He also spoke of the dual role of imperialism.

But the first-destructive-role partly accomplished, the second-regenerating-role of which he had spoken in the 1850's was of course never fulfilled. Capitalism's innate dynamism of which the 1848 *Communist Manifesto* had spoken in terms of its capacity to disintegrate and digest the old society and then recreate it in its own image, was found greatly wanting vis-a-vis the non-European world especially regarding the second function. This phenomenon of incomplete transformation was of course inherent in the process due to two factors : first; the in-built institutional strength of the pre-capitalist structure in the eastern countries, its resistance against the onrush of capitalist relations, and above all its resilience and capacity to survive. Secondly, the fact that the advent of capitalist relations introduced by the European powers was carried out by them and their compradors evidently for profit and not for the sake of spreading any particular system or ideology. It would of course have been very surprising if it were otherwise.

The European capitalist power exploited the eastern countries primarily as sources of raw material and as markets ; thus the most

dynamic new aspects of capitalism wherein the social surplus goes to an entrepreneur class and not for ostentatious and wasteful luxury, and motioned by the profit motive of this class, the social surplus is largely reinvested in production, thus setting in motion an expanding and rising spiral. These aspects, largely, did not touch upon the eastern countries which were colonized. The exceptions were the colonies in the original sense of the word, those which were settled in by large masses of population from the metropolitan countries, but there the native population was vastly reduced and brought to a greatly humbled position if not altogether liquidated. In the other colonies, the imperial power began with certain infrastructural developments and some industrialization particularly of extractive processes, reorganization of agriculture in plantations, etc.; but largely the native economies were not fundamentally altered.

In fact the European capitalist powers almost always drew into its colonial administrative system significant elements of the native pre-capitalist structures which were used as props to its domination. The capitalization process, under the circumstances, was by definition incomplete, in fact over vast parts of the colonized territories, it had hardly begun although the economies of each one of those countries or territories were in some way integrated with and made subservient to the world market. This was the special distinguishing feature of the economies of the colonies, wherein the superior dynamism of European capitalism was first instrumental in breaking down the previous economic structure; but having done so it immediately created a new partnership between itself and the vanquished but not totally destroyed the old structure. Of course, the extent to which the old was destroyed, the quantum of the new capitalist relationships introduced, the levels at which this compromise or balance was struck, all varied from country to country, but everywhere it was a mixture of *both* elements, the proportion varying over a very wide range. It is this aspect which perhaps prompted some writers to suggest introduction of the concept of a colonial mode of production. But although the description was true enough, to call it a new and independent category as a mode of production would be quite contrary to the precise scientific meaning given to the term by Marx.

Thus we see the first path was found to be closed by Marx himself in his own life-time and even in the subsequent hundred years since

his death, no non-European type society has been able to reach what is now called the economic take-off stage. (We shall discuss the case of Japan and later of the socialist countries in due course). Let us make a review of some of the attempts at capitalist development made at a distance from the main scene of capitalist development in western Europe and across the Atlantic in North America. Let us take Petrine Russia (the earliest in our list) and Meiji Japan (the last) and in between let us also consider the historically significant attempts at modernization by Tipu Sultan in India, Mohamet Ali in Egypt and the case of the Latin American countries (as a group) as they began to be independent by the middle of the nineteenth century.

Our list is not arbitrary. Peter, Meiji, Tipu, Mohamet Ali and a number of Latin American leaders were all extremely conscious of the need of modernization, that their countries have been left behind, and of the need of special concerted drive to make up for lost time. All of them to a considerable measure understood the importance of the role of the state in using it as the battering ram to attack the old structure simultaneously while resisting the probes and pressures of the expanding European or western capitalist powers and as the organizing principle for building up the new economy. This could be said to be on the basis of the lesson of the absolute monarchies in western Europe in the preceding century. But whether an attempt was met with success or was aborted depended on two factors. First, whether a particular dynamic leader was able to reorganize the state on the new principle adequately, but much more importantly, the most significant *sine qua non* for their success was whether the proto-bourgeois classes who will be instrumental in the development of capitalism stood on the same side of the fence as the central political authority in their country or not.

As we can see, this will depend on a whole range of factors and merely locating one phenomenon such as landownership for instance will not be enough. The importance of state power in promoting advancement in the social sphere will of course be of the highest significance. State as an umbrella covers several aspects of society which exists in a complex relationship with each other. The state

in the eastern societies is merged with the entire social fabric and represents both a far greater degree of concentration of power as well as an overbearing functional role (not exclusively hydraulic). It is not a simple case of the state being the instrument of the most dominant class ; in the eastern society the state is itself a massive entity far bigger than the classes, and in the absence of the evolution of clearly defined estates the proto-bourgeois classes had such a limited scope of operating that with the advent of European expansionism they found far greater avenues of advancement as compradors than they ever had or would have otherwise under the Asiatic system.

Thus we see the pre-conditions for national capitalist development in the eastern countries (even after the injection of the European germ) were indeed exceedingly difficult. The most evident contrast with Europe lay in the fact that in Europe there was a triangular relationship in which the monarchy saw the rising trend in the bourgeoisie and either sided with it or at least played a balancing role between the feudals and the bourgeoisie gradually tilting towards the latter. In the eastern countries there was no such triangular situation. In the eastern countries the central political authority and the regional or local feudals were chips of the same bloc. Even in times of acute political disintegration, the class character of the central political authority (now declining) and any new rising regional or local power nevertheless remained the same. The relationship of the mercantile proto-bourgeois sections vis-a-vis whether the older central authority or the new regional authority remained unchanged. Both retained and manifested the same hierarchical Asiatic character and it was impossible to expect that they would suddenly yield an unprecedented set of concessions to the proto-bourgeoisie in order to wean them over from their highly profitable dealings with the Europeans.

In Japan, however, such a thing happened. The foreign probes and incursions acted as a stimulating jolt and the new Meiji regime succeeding in getting the merchants and the bourgeoisie to come to its side. Here both factors must be taken note of. First, the Meiji regime itself was sufficiently different from the previous rule which it replaced. But apart from this immediate factor the real reason lay in the fundamental structural difference of Japanese society as

compared to the continental society in China, Korea, etc. This was shown by Norman Jacobs in his *The Origin of Modern Capitalism and Eastern Asia* (published from the Hong Kong University Press in 1958). But it seems this work has not been sufficiently taken note of among marxist scholars.

So far we have seen that the incapacity of eastern societies for a transition to capitalism lies in their fundamental structural character. But this characteristic structure was forged not in the eighteenth century or even in the medieval period but millenia before at the very dawn of their histories.

...Asiatic mode of production represented the original transition stage between classless and class society ; the stage where the state had already come into being but private property did not yet exist. The stage was characterised by the existence of communal production and ownership at the village level, on the one hand, and by the appropriation of the surplus value by the state, and the existence of (state-directed) corvée labour on the other ; economic classes did not yet exist, but there were elites associated with the state who performed religious, military and other public functions (Sawer, p. 194 ).

The Asiatic mode of production is the social structure of the original civilizations created by the first agricultural revolutions in the sub-tropical river valleys followed by their respective metallurgical revolutions. All this threw up a basic mould to which all the civilizations owed a family kinship. Using the Gordon-Childe definition of the term, civilization represented a qualitative jump from the previous culture (the stage of barbarism in Morgan and Engels). Civilization thus represented a new agricultural surplus which could feed the non-food producing metal— and other workers and the use of metals in its turn further increased the food surplus. But all this also brought about the creation of a new disciplined regimented social organization and the emergence of not only of an elite, overwhelmingly superior to the rest of the population, but also its very numerous staff constituting both the bureaucracy of the state and its standing army. All the original civilizations had this familial resemblance. They were all in the semi-tropical river valleys because these alone provided the potential for creating such vast food surpluses through extensive state-directed agriculture at that early stage.

Civilization thus represented the twin aspects of a higher technology and a new social organization represented by the emergence of the state. One may say that at that early stage man paid a price for the acquisition of technology, namely his loss of freedom and his own alienation with the birth of the state. Price of technology was the emergence of a social dictatorship. This is what happened in history.

Against this general background something very different happened in Greece. Greeks were at such a critical distance from the ancient great civilizations of the east that they neither remained totally uninfluenced nor came to much under their sway. The latter could have happened in either of two ways : conquest and general absorption, on the one hand, or such direct prolonged military confrontation as would induce the Greek side to gradually reproduce in their own society the social organization of their more powerful adversaries. It seems, even in Greece at an earlier stage, particularly in Crete (Minoan) and Mycenae there are signs and distinct elements of the AMP till the Dorian invasion at the beginning of the first millennium B.C. But with this fresh beginning society regains some of its previously held freedoms and Greek society is able gradually to acquire some of the crucial technology from the eastern civilizations without paying the price which its originators had to pay in their own societies. (We may mention here in passing that the beautiful story of Prometheus stealing fire from the gods perhaps celebrates the historical occurrence of a successful stealing of the jealously guarded secrets of metal smelting by the Greeks most probably from the Phoenicians).

This was the most unprecedented and remarkable development in the history of man. Here were the descendants of the Dorian hordes not yet alienated from the natural rights and functions of man enjoying the fruits of higher technology and civilization without having to pay the price which all the preceding civilizations have had to pay. The uniqueness of the Greek civilization lay in that it was not an original civilization, it was a secondary civilization and it created a new mould qualitatively different from the previous one. About the reflection in Greek art and mythology of these felicitous social circumstances, Marx referred to it 'as the historical childhood

of humanity, where it attained its most beautiful form exerting an eternal charm... There are rude children and precocious children. Many of the ancient peoples belong to this category. The Greeks were normal children'. Of course Greek society would soon be vitiated by the emergence of slavery, nevertheless the concepts of the free citizen and his rights, of the inviolability of law, and of security of property left their permanent mark on the basic mould which decisively influenced not only the other Mediterranean peoples but on European societal thinking as a whole. While speaking of slavery, one should not forget Marx's repeated use of the term general or universal slavery in reference to Oriental society in contrast to the classical slavery in the Greco-Roman world.

The second occasion when we can make an analogous contrast between Europe and the east is the case of the rise of feudalism. The Atlantic civilization whose basic structure was laid down by Charlemagne and the Arab-Islamic civilization which was created by Mohammed both began at about the same time from nearly the same low levels of material civilization. Both had the Greco-Roman and the Jewish-Christian, that is the Palestinian, heritage in common. If we compare their progress we shall find that the latter, that is, the Arab-Islamic is more dynamic and has a faster tempo. This is reflected both in the remarkable military-political expansion as well as in the development of material civilization. For centuries Europe was learning from the Arabs, both contemporary technology as well as the achievements of Greco-Roman thought and science then preserved only in the Arab world. This was so till, say, the thirteenth century. Yet within a couple of centuries, with the renaissance, Europe forged ahead and achieved a spurt of dynamism which does not seem to have been fully exhausted yet. What is the explanation of this phenomenon ? Non-marxist European scholars tend to refer to some hidden or latent dynamism of European civilization, to its open society and pluralism etc. But we have just referred to the tremendous initial dynamism and pace of material progress of the Arab-Islamic society in the beginning. We have to find a deeper explanation. Why did the Arab-Islamic world stagnate after a stage, while its slow-starting rival could forge ahead ? It seems to me the secret is in the *stability* of the social structure of the Arab-Islamic world ; the same stability which had

been the motor of its earlier dynamism and fast tempo later became its fetters preventing any structural transformation and hence the cause of its stagnation.

The essential core of Marx's concept of the Asiatic mode of production is the relative stagnation in the structural evolution of society in the east ; and secondly, an overwhelming concentration of power at the apex of the pyramid in a hierarchical society, both in sharp contrast to the situation that obtained in Europe under feudalism.

It seems, there are two types of mental barriers with which we are confornted in accepting this thesis. The first is that we understand Marx as the propounder of the law of progress and the very concept of stagnation seems an anathema in that context. But Marx nowhere suggests unilinear motion at uniform speed. Neither does he suggest a unilinear universal model nor can progress possibly be at constant rate over historical time. Crises, stagnation, spurts of quick change during revolutionary transformation, and even temporary retrogression are all essential components of overall ultimate progress in the long run. The second is a value-loaded apprehension. If progress is the historical destiny of all mankind, many non-European historians ask, should Marx condemn the majority of mankind to a role of historical passivity ? In reply to that shall we ask these historians why they are not protesting to God why the eastern countries were allowed to run their civilizations for three to four millenia while the Greeks much less and the other Europeans had not even entered the field ?

Thus we see the terms stability and stagnation are extremely interrelated referring to the same structural factors in a society at different points of time. In the case of Europe this stability is less, the hierarchical structure is evidently weaker and defective—from the point of view of the system itself, that is. The social pyramid is not all-comprehensive, leaving the town and long-distance trade outside its sweep, with the result that there is no severe limiting-restricting factor operating against the merchants and urban producers allowing both to grow to an unprecedented extent and then to merge and coalesce, resulting in a new integrated element that is altogether new in human history which of course was the breakthrough that constituted capitalist development. It is the

"weakness" and "defect" of the hierarchical structure which obtained in feudal Europe that allowed itself to be successfully challenged and subsequently smashed by the rise of capitalism within a millennium since its inception. What then is the law of history that we can deduce from all this? That stability is a particular development of the superstructure.

The superstructure, in Marx's philosophical system, is thrown up to meet the requirements of the material, that is, the economic base. Whenever the thrown-up superstructure carries out the need-fulfilment of the economic base too perfectly, the result is the kind of structural stability that we are talking about which eventually will become the factor of stagnation several centuries later. That is to say the possibilities of structural transformation or of stagnation are in-built in the makings of the previous structure, which means that the more dynamic and advanced civilization of one period will advance up to a point and then mark time till another society with a lesser initial dynamism and consequently with a weaker structural stability provides a more hospitable environment for the germs of a superior dynamism to be born, be nourished and developed, and eventually usurp and transform that structure resulting in something all-together new. It will be seen that in all this reasoning we are following exclusively Marx's own method in seeking to extend our understanding from that of the process of transition from one social formation to another within one civilization, to one towards a more general theory of the interaction of civilizations. It will be seen too, according to the scheme, that revolution is always to be expected first not in the most developed unit in a given formation-system but where the chain of the system's stability is the weakest, that is why Spain and Portugal which were initially far more successful in the period of the colonial expansion did not get the fruits of the triumph of capitalism within their countries, and capitalist development took place in England or Netherlands which were far weaker powers in the beginning. Similarly, the first socialist revolution did not take place in England or the USA but took place in the much more backward Russia.

How shall we summarize this discussion to get an overview of Marx's vision of history? First, that stagnation is as essential and

integral an element among Marx's concepts as any other. The primary examples of stagnation were those pockets of primitive peoples who did not make it to civilization and remained at different levels of tribal-barbarian stage. Next come the great civilizations which began four to five millenia ago. But the cultural level of man when he was mobilized or regimented in the organization of civilization (or to put it differently when his alienation took place in the first class society) was too low, consequently his position in society vis-a-vis the state remained too low. Such societies flourished for centuries but had to mark time at the pre-capitalist stage which marked the limit of their growth possibility. The basic difference between the civilizations of the first mould and the later Greek organization lay in this that in the former the state came into being *before* the emergence of private property whereas in the latter the emergence of private property preceded the fullfledged formation of the state.

Later, in the Atlantic civilization, that is in feudal Europe, the societal structure was much weaker compared to that in the civilizations of mould-I due to the following : 1. much greater security of property, 2. absence of a monolithic societal structure, particularly the separation between the church and the state, and 3. a particularly benign religion which lent itself to an unprecedented Reformation at a certain stage which then in its cumulative effect increased social mobility and weakened the traditional seats of power. The return of a vast number of very adventurous men from the crusades who had acquired many skills and technologies during their long stay abroad, led to their being settled in the new towns which were then granted such concessions as would be quite impossible in the countries of mould-I. The towns then grew as islands of the proto-bourgeois forces.

Now to come to the present, the post-decolonization era. How does the legacy of mould-I from the distant past and the legacy of colonization more recently affect us today ? Just as the offsprings of mould-I could not jump over the limiting hurdle to enter capitalism, today too the countries of the Third World cannot reach the so-called take-off stage in their economic development while remaining within the system of capitalism. (In fact this is the only common scientific definition even of the term Third World). Further, the

decolonized mould-I countries of today all have essentially multi-structured societies. Quite naturally so since they have all had their injection of capitalism under colonialism, yet that capitalism had transformed the old structures only partially, and the latter survive. As long as a Third World country remains totally under the system of capitalism, the native capitalists remain under very powerful negative pressures from two sources. *First*, from the remaining pre-capitalist structures which prevent any radical social transformation of genuine expansion of the domestic market. Instead there is a series of compromises and link-ups between the capitalist sector and the feudal usurious and trading sectors. This results in the much talked of phenomenon of economic *growth without development*, a set of pockets of comparatively advanced capitalist development in a sea of general economic backwardness and continuation of pre-capitalist relations, a feature so well known for over a century in Latin America.

Capitalist entrepreneurs left to themselves to pursue their profit motive cannot in our countries in our time lead to the overall development of the economy à la Adam Smith. Left to themselves as the economic class they are incapable of repeating the historic role of their European class cousins in the 18th or 19th centuries. Of course there is a fundamental difference between the two situations. For the European bourgeoisie the rest of the world was like a reservoir from which to draw profits constituting the primitive accumulation of capital on the strength of which it could establish supremacy over the pre-capitalist structures at home. Today there is no such easily available 'outside' from which to draw the super profits on the strength of which to overwhelm the internal structures. *Secondly*, there is the overbearing power of imperialism and neo-colonialism, in addition to the internal limitations which too puts insurmountable hurdles in the path of independent domestic capitalist development. Doubly faced with these internal limitations and external constraints, sections of the native capitalists are lured to opt for collaboration with the giant foreign monopolies, the transnational corporations. Instead of pursuing the difficult and arduous struggle for acquiring an independent economic base, they opt for quicker financial gains by accepting positions of junior collaborators with the foreign monopolies. Thus an atrophied economic development with compromises



with the pre-capitalist structures internally and a dependent development that remains subservient to world capitalism (that is imperialism and neo-colonialism) externally, complete the picture. This was the pattern that constituted the political mechanisms for the perpetuation of economic underdevelopment even over formally independent countries. In this domestic capitalism has proved to be totally ineffective to make a breakthrough out of this vicious circle.

Therefore comes the role of the state as a very essential prop to direct and regulate the economy in the developing countries to steer through and overcoming the negative pressures from the two sources just mentioned. There is no easy 'automatism' for the developing countries of depending on the operation of the so-called market forces. It is also not a question whether to wish for capitalist development or non-capitalist development per se. The real choice is between "destabilization" and arrested development, as just explained, and effective independent self-reliant development which however will more and more require the gradual introduction of a socialist orientation. This brings us to what has been variously described as the second battle for independence, the struggle for economic independence now collectively enshrined in the demand for the New International Economic Order (NIEO). But that struggle which is directed against the forces of imperialism and neo-colonialism has an essential internal edge also. In spite of all the broad unity of the developing countries such governments as are unwilling or opposed to making efforts for bringing about a new economic order at home are most unlikely to be effective in struggling to bring about a new international order abroad. That is the dialectical unity between the struggle for internal democratic reforms in a developing country and its strivings for economic independence vis-a-vis imperialism and neo-colonialism. There is no escape from this ; you cannot succeed in one without simultaneously fighting for the other.

Similarly, the greatest positive feature on the world scene today, in addition to the cumulative aspect of all the formerly colonized countries having attained political independence, is the existence of the USSR and the other socialist countries as an alternative source for capital goods and an alternative market for raw materials to break the monopoly of the world capitalist market, but even this

positive potential can be taken advantage of only to the extent the government leadership of an individual developing country chooses to assert its international solidarity and dares to confront the power of imperialism.

In certain periods of history objective, mainly economic, forces operate and bring about fundamental positive changes. What Marx had described as the emergence of *civil society* was one such. But such fortuitous felicitous circumstances occur not so frequently. For other societies it is the operation of the subjective political forces, the mobilization of the will and consciousness of the masses in their millions which hold the key. That what history has left undone can be hastened and accomplished by human volition and endeavour, but only in accordance with the laws of history. When we take count of the stupendous changes on the world scene brought about more than anything else by the force of ideas fashioned by Marx we also take stock of the unfinished tasks. It is only in the light of the knowledge of the laws of history as discovered by Marx that the remaining business can be completed. Knowledge of the characteristic qualities of the non-European eastern societies even if rooted in their very distant past is not only relevant but even essential for tackling the immediate problems of the present day. We pay our homage to the everlasting genius of Marx by seeking to delve deeper into the labyrinths of history illuminated by the light of his thought and at the same time strengthen our resolve to strive to build a future for mankind befitting the science and culture of our present epoch in the same light.

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## PATTERNS AND TRENDS IN THE GROWTH OF AN INDUSTRIAL WORKING CLASS IN INDIA

RAKHAHARI CHATTERJI

MARX'S FAITH IN the railway system introduced by the British in India in transforming Indian society is well known. Such transformation would be possible, Marx believed, for Indians were not an unchanging people. Rather, Marx thought, Indians could accommodate themselves to entirely new labour and acquire requisite knowledge of machinery. He made two interesting propositions in this connection: that Indians are suited to become capitalists as well as industrial workers, and that Indian industrial proletariat would be caste-free. Indeed, the smoothness with which an industrial working class (and an entrepreneurial class as well) has emerged in India quite confirms Marx's propositions.

The purpose of the present paper however is neither to examine Marx's ideas about the development of social and economic formations in societies nor to discuss the general question of the development of classes in India in a historical perspective. The paper will merely try to examine, in the light of Marx's two propositions mentioned above, the process of growth of an urban industrial working class in India and acquisition of its own identity by this class. For reasons of space, I will nearly skip a description of the growth of the industrial workers and concentrate, instead, on an analysis of the broad patterns that mark the process of their growth.

### Growth and Supply of the Industrial Workforce

While the cultivation of indigo was one of the first areas which attracted European investment, it did not require the development of an industrial workforce as it could be done by local peasants within the framework of zemindari system of agrarian relations. The

plantations, on the other hand, beginning from the 1830s, required the development of a labour force for working in the plantations, a labour force which could not be local especially in Assam, and also which could not be fitted into the existing pattern of agrarian relations. With the development of tea plantations therefore a new system of recruiting and organizing labour force became necessary, for this labour force had to work under wage labour system and far away from their native places. In the 1850s, the modern factory system started with the establishment of cotton mills and jute mills in western and eastern parts of India respectively. This marked the systematic beginning of the growth of factory labour or an industrial working class in India.

Ever since factories had started in India, they continued to expand requiring more and more "hands" to be employed. Occasionally, due to ecological or business cycle conditions, the industries, especially cotton and jute, faced contraction and had a reduction in the number of employees ; yet, generally they expanded swelling the number of workers. From the 1880s official records of factory employment were maintained and these records show a steep rise in factory employment in India since 1895.

The growth and supply of workers to the plantations, mills and factories in India have been studied by a number of scholars.<sup>1</sup> Their studies, taken together, seem to suggest the following : first, that supply of labour was not a problem for the emergent mills, factories and mines in India (though in some sense, it was a problem for the plantations) ; second, that workers were coming in search of jobs without much systematic effort by the employers to recruit them ; and finally that, labour supply was so ample that the employers did not have to enhance wages occasionally or to offer attractive housing conditions and health facilities, or even to bother about efficient labour management.

#### *Sources of the Industrial Workforce*

That an industrial workforce could be created with such an ease in a country like India — deeply tradition-bound, overwhelmingly agricultural, characterized by the presence of archaic social structures and beliefs, and not even psychologically integrated (in the 1880s),

appears very surprising. In fact, this situation very interestingly contrasts with the first case of industrialization in the world, namely, Britain. In Britain, there was considerable reluctance on the part of the potential workforce to join the mills and factories in the first few decades of industrialization. Professor Eric Hobsbawm informs us, "Though factory wages tended to be higher than those in the domestic industries ... workers were reluctant to enter them because in doing so men lost their birthright, independence. Indeed this is one reason why they were filled, where possible, with the more tractable women and children : in 1838 only twenty-three per cent of textile factory workers were adult men."<sup>2</sup>

In contrast, there does not seem to have been any dearth of adult male workers for the textile and jute mills in Bombay and Bengal from the very beginning.

Morris dealt with the question of sex distribution of the labour force in the Bombay mills at some length and found very limited use of female and child labour in Bombay compared to other countries. Even for the earliest years for which he could gather evidence, he found adult males constituted no less than 69% of the labour force and women never more than 25%. This led Morris simply to conclude that "there were no shortages of potential male mill hands," thus making the employment of women and children somewhat unnecessary.<sup>3</sup>

In view of this easy availability of adult male labour compared to Britain in the earlier stages of industrialization, it may be asked what were the factors that made so many men so easily and abundantly available to the mills and factories in India.

#### *Villagers as Factory Workers*

Almost nothing is known about the millhands or other labourers in India during the first three decades of industrialization. It is possible that, like England, the "strangers" and beggars in urban areas were used to some extent, especially as carriers of burden in the dockyards and other places. But even if that was done, it must have been for a very shortwhile. For Oriya and Bihari labourers for the delivery of goods at dockyards started to be shipped into Calcutta

from a very early date. Messrs Bird and Company began to work as labour contractors from as early as 1864.<sup>4</sup> In other words, it may be claimed that generally, Indian mills and factories from very early times could rely on people who were not purposeless bands of men wandering in the cities but people coming to the mill and factory gates for the purpose of finding jobs, jobs which, they believed, might promote their prospects in the native villages from which they came and with which they were intimately tied by multidimensional social nexus. This last point which hints at the oft-discussed "rural link" of the Indian worker will be elaborated later.

Keeping in mind that the birthplace data of the workers in India are neither systematic nor very reliable in their specifics, we may broadly say that from the beginning in the 1850s to 1921 the sources of labour were somewhat different in the two major centres of industrial activity, viz, Bengal and Bombay, in terms of geographical location. While Bengal mills started predominantly with Bengali labour, increasingly over time, they were replaced by non-Bengali labour drawn from certain specific areas ('labour catchment areas' as these are called) quite distant from the mills. In Bombay, on the other hand, from the beginning till 1921, the Maharastrian labourers drawn from Konkan coastal districts and Deccan inland districts of the Presidency were predominant, though after 1900 some people started to move into the Bombay mills from distant U.P. districts as well. But till 1921 these latter constituted no more than 10 per cent of Bombay's mill labour force. The minor centres of industrial activity, such as, Kanpur and Madras, relied heavily on local labour first because these places, being labour-supplying areas themselves, had no reason to import labour from outside ; secondly, the mills in these areas had the lowest wage rates in India and hence, they had to use more women labour who had to be local. Above all, these being minor centres, did not need a huge labour force, and therefore, the question of labour supply from long distances was somewhat irrelevant for them.

Coming back to the question of labour supply to Bombay and Bengal then we find that the labourers came from certain districts, and being inhabitants of villages in these districts, we may safely

assume, they were basically connected with agricultural activity in some way prior to their joining the mills. The obvious question, then, is what drove these people away from their traditional surroundings and occupations to factory employment ?

#### *Causes of Migration from Villages to Factories*

While it has been difficult for the historians to definitively establish that these millhands were all landless labourers in their villages, the data analysed by both Morris and Das Gupta, for Bombay and Bengal respectively, as well as the inquiries conducted by the Royal Commission on labour all over India have led them to believe that the incoming labourers came from "rural proletariats" and "social rejects" of which there was no dearth in the villages of India.<sup>6</sup> Misra, while making an in-depth analysis of the interviews given by 96 workers to the Indian Factory Commission of 1890 in Bombay, Ahmedabad, Kanpur and Calcutta, shows that the industrial workers were rural "lumpens" rather than agricultural labourers. Misra feels that industrial wage was no better than agricultural wage ; yet these men came because they had nothing to do in the villages, the villages held no attraction for them.<sup>6</sup>

Lalita Chakravorty, writing on the same theme and using the data provided by the above-mentioned historians, also concludes that the industrial workers were agricultural proletarians. She finds that "the push factor in subsistence agriculture... to be the main explanatory factor behind labour migration." This "push factor" was not uniform, even though the "pull" of urban growth poles were uniform. According to Chakravorty, variations in the "push factor" in the agrarian sector depended on a number of factors. Chakravorty feels that the operation of these factors by lowering their subsistence level made the rural proletariat "footloose" and broke up supposedly stable configuration of village communities in the catchment areas. And this happened with a nominal increase in population rather than with a Malthusian explosion. These factors operated differently in different regions within India, thereby creating diverse rural response to industry's need for labour : thus, coastal Konkan rather than Bombay Deccan or U.P. rather than Bengal became labour catchment areas.<sup>7</sup>

Foley's report devoted a chapter to the recruiting districts. In it we find that Foley identified the districts of Saran, Muzaffarpur, Darbhanga, ( north ) Sahabad, Patna, ( north ) Monghyr and parts of Balasore and Cuttack as congested districts around industrial Bengal. But emigration from these districts was not determined by congestion alone. Factors such as lack of any additional area for cultivation, the number of landless labourers, land-man ratio, overall degree of poverty, enterprise of the people in finding new avenues of income also helped or hindered emigration.<sup>8</sup> For many of these latter factors population density, of course, was a condition precedent.

The condition of agriculture in India during British rule remains, till now, a matter of serious debate among historians. While painstaking researches are on, no general all-India picture has yet emerged. In the face of fragmentary evidence and contradictory interpretations, it is very difficult for us to establish any clear relationship between specific agrarian conditions and the availability of industrial workers. Hence, the following points are being made with great caution and only tentatively.

First of all, it seems that even though till 1920, population in India was generally static, it does not mean that emigration of rural people to urban employment centres had no connection with pressure of population. Areas of great density, such as Saran, Muzaffarpur, Darbhanga or Sahabad around Bengal and Ratnagiri in Bombay Presidency became important exporters of factory labour.

Lalita Chakravorty, in taking the years 1880-1920 for her study, points out that this period is eminently suited for studying "dual labour market," for here one could at least set aside one exogenous variable, namely, rising population and demographic pressure on land as a factor generating "surplus agrarian labour" for factories. She further says, "So it was not the Malthusian demon but a nominal increase in population ... pressing hard on water resources ... that held the key to lowering of the subsistence level of the agrarian proletariat."<sup>9</sup>

It is true that Kingsley Davis, whom Chakravarty quotes in her defence, finds population growth in India between 1871 and 1947 to be very moderate by world standards and he says that

between 1871 and 1921 the rate of growth was only 0.4% per annum. Yet, there are two things to be remembered : first, that even with an aggregate low rate of growth of population for all-India, there were regions where growth was quite significant. For instance, in Madras Presidency (relevant for us because it was a labour recruiting area), the growth of population was 15.7% between 1881 and 1891 and another 15.5% between 1891 and 1911.

Between 1911-1921, the rate of increase in population drastically declined to 2.2% in Madras, but that was due, as census commissioner reported, to severe epidemic of influenza in 1918. Unfavourable monsoon, rising prices, and high rate of infant mortality helped to depress the growth further.

Further, as Ira Klein has very convincingly argued with regard to northern India (United Provinces of Agra and Oudh), small increases in population was more a function of extraordinarily high death rate than of a very low birth rate :

Population levelled off because overcrowding and difficult economic conditions enabled malaria, plague, influenza, cholera, dysentery and famine to decimate the poor and the weak ... Difficult conditions stimulated the exodus to Calcutta and other cities, to less crowded agrarian regions, and overseas.<sup>10</sup>

Klein says that by the middle of the 19th century northern India became heavily populated. By 1900 there was intense population pressure and reports came from district after district of scarcity of land for extension of cultivation. Population increase also led to severe involution of plots.

In short, then, the conditions of northern India showed that the low rate of growth of population was essentially the result of a balance "between man, nature, technology and crowding, which remained in force to 1921."<sup>11</sup>

Thus, it was not the absence of the Malthusian problem as Chakravarty argues, but rather the operation of the Malthusian solution that led to create the appearance of semi-stationary population. In leaving their villages for jobs in eastern India, the villagers were

trying to flee starvation, disease and death consequent upon over-crowding and governmental callousness.

Secondly, we must also point out that population density in the form of land/man ratio operated as a factor encouraging emigration independent of population increase. The behaviour of different regions within the Bombay Presidency with regard to labour supply to the Bombay mills is a case in point. We have already pointed out that the Konkan region, especially Ratnagiri district, supplied the bulk of the immigrants to Bombay. According to Morris, nearly 50% of Bombay's cotton mill operatives came from Ratnagiri in 1901.<sup>13</sup> In 1911, the proportion of millhands supplied by Ratnagiri came down to 35.53%, but because of a steady increase in the total number of millhands, this proportional decline did not constitute an absolute decline (the total number coming from Ratnagiri remained around 50,000). The census data also show that between 1911 and 1921 the number Ratnagiri emigrants to Bombay city increased substantially, though a large number of them might have gone to other jobs than millwork.<sup>14</sup> In contrast, there was a meagre increase in the number of emigrants from northern districts of the Presidency.

When this information is seen against the picture of agricultural development within the Presidency, it becomes rather enlightening. Neil Charlesworth informs us that throughout the first two decades of the twentieth century there was a steady improvement in agriculture in Bombay, though it was "spread extremely unevenly." "Buoyancy was shifting to the north; stagnation was setting throughout much of the south." While greater buoyancy was in Gujarat, in the Konkan, where land-man ratio was traditionally low, the cultivated acreage trend remained largely static. He also reports that while in the Presidency there was 4.1% rise in population between 1901-21, in Ratnagiri and Kolaba the population actually declined during the same period.<sup>15</sup> Despite declining population, according to one estimate, land per head in Konkan was only half an acre in 1914-15.<sup>16</sup> This was not enough, even if one takes into account the fact that Konkan was an intensive wet-crop area.

Thus, Konkan region with a declining population remained a far greater supplier of emigrant labour to Bombay than the arid

Southern Maratha districts in the Deccan, for in the latter, with forest and wasteland being steadily cleared throughout the 19th century and with the cultivation of a variety of cash crops, especially cotton, it became probably easier for one to eke out a living. Indeed, with the expansion of relatively labour-intensive cash crops like cotton and sugarcane in central and southern Deccan, in addition to the agriculturally prosperous northern Gujarat districts, scarcity of rural labour was felt in many areas and there was also a rising trend in real wages.<sup>16</sup>

Thirdly, it may be argued, that in general, the villagers, if they could find ways of sustaining themselves however meagrely, the definition for sustenance being unfathomably low — they would prefer to stay on both in their villages and in their traditional occupations. The case of the peasants in the *Doab* as well as in Bengal probably illustrate this.

A serious controversy has emerged regarding the role of the irrigation canals in the *Doab* among the historians recently.<sup>17</sup> Whether expansion in cultivation both in terms of area and variety of crops was due to canal irrigation as Stone argues, or to "the recovery of villages that had lost ground in the Mutiny and the famine," as Klein says, the fact remains that the *Doab* districts never became labour-supplying areas. Whatever the reasons, in all probability the peasants could find some ways of sustaining themselves through traditional occupations.

The evidence provided by Rajat Roy and Benoy Bhushan Choudhury with regard to Bengal during the last decades of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth century gives a picture of stagnant agriculture, insignificant population growth and an overall process of small farmers being dispossessed of their land.<sup>18</sup>

Near complete stagnation was the result. A stagnant agriculture threw out some people who left villages for urban employment in factories and railway workshops. But interestingly, most people tried hard not to sell their entire holdings,<sup>19</sup> to work on their involuted plots or as bargadars for a bare minimum for living, or else, as with the Muslim peasants in eastern Bengal districts, to

migrate to Assam to remain cultivators.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, in 1905, Foley did not find much surplus agricultural labour in Bengal for mill employment.<sup>21</sup>

#### *Mobility of the Rural Folk*

The available historical evidence shows, therefore, that while significant changes were taking place in rural society throughout the nineteenth century impinging upon the emergent industrial India, neither in their patterns nor in their consequences these changes were uniform. While peasants in the wet-crop Konkan region with a declining population responded to agricultural stagnation and pressure on land by emigrating to the Bombay mills, the rice cultivating Bengalis with a slow population growth and a stagnant agriculture preferred, by and large, to remain marginal peasants and bargadars. The south Indian peasants were driven to the plantations and mills and factories along distances away from their homes by the pressure of population while the villagers in the United Provinces thought it better to emigrate for non-agricultural work inland or abroad than to starve and die under the compulsions of an inevitable balance among man, nature and technology. It may never be revealed to what extent these responses were the result of well-thought-out choices for each individual or groups of persons. Internal migration (and possibly to a large extent even emigration abroad) was generally free, except for the plantations. The myth of the ultra-stable rural Indian society sometimes makes one wonder about the particular motivations and forces behind migration in nineteenth century India. In fact, throughout history Indian peasants have migrated from place to place whenever conditions threatened their existence. "Changeless Orient" was largely a common cliche. Indeed, the Census Commissioner of 1871 census very pertinently observed, "Hindus have a great capacity for adapting themselves to circumstances and necessities."<sup>22</sup> Irfan Habib has brilliantly depicted this phenomenon while examining the agrarian crisis during the Mughal period.<sup>23</sup> Habib quotes numerous attesting to the fact that the "cruelly and pitilessly oppressed" peasant under the jagirdari system would very often desert their villages leaving their fields unsown and in wildness. He found, on the basis of contemporary authorities, that "the flight of the peasants from their land was a common

phenomenon and that it was apparently growing in momentum with the passage of years." In view of such evidence, the assumption of the nationalist-minded economic historians like R. C. Dutt or Dadabhai Naoroji of a pre-British India where famines were absent as were landless labourers seems suspect. Yet, it is possibly correct, as Barrington Moore, who is less optimistic about pre-British India than the nationalist historians, asserts that British rule "increased the size of the rural proletariat."<sup>4</sup> The easy availability of migrants from villages to the urban centres and non-agricultural workplaces in India in late nineteenth century was indeed a function of this increased size of the rural proletariat.

The somewhat patchy picture of the social background of the workers in Bombay cotton mills and Calcutta jute mills available in Morris and Das Gupta as well as the hints available about the conditions of the emigrants in Klein's paper on northern India amply show this. They point out first, that those who came from their villages for work to the cities were persons who could not make a living in their villages. For them, the choice was simply between starvation or death and emigration.

Secondly, we find that the mills had a tendency to hire Muslim hands simply for the fact that they were by profession weavers. This tendency was apparent both in Bombay and in Calcutta. While in Bombay Muslims did not constitute a large proportion of the mill labour force ( 5.2%), in Bengal the jolahs alone among the Muslims constituted about 10% of the jute workforce and Muslims as a group constituted 31.8% of the jute labour.<sup>5</sup> Thus the second most important group to leave villages for factory and mill work were the traditional artisans. It may be that traditional handicrafts did not completely disappear in British India as nationalist politicians would have us believe.<sup>6</sup> Yet, it was true that a huge number of artisans lost their crafts and went to cultivation during the de-urbanization process under Company rule. As opportunity for non-agricultural work became available in the new urban centres of Bombay and Calcutta they quickly left agricultural work which they were ill at ease, and took the new opportunities.

The third major component of mill and factory labour force were the low caste people and the untouchables. Dharma Kumar found in her work on Madras such low caste people as "tenants-at-will" or

"agricultural labourers" providing required labour to the upper castes, particularly Brahmins, who held large amounts of land but were barred from actually tilling them by caste norms.<sup>37</sup> While the amount of land held by the upper castes or the degree of oppression of lower castes might have varied from place to place, generally this was true for the whole country. While Morris did not find a high proportion of low caste people and untouchables in the Bombay mills, Das Gupta found a huge proportion of jute labour constituted by low caste and untouchable people.

Being traditionally landless and oppressed, it was quite expected that these people would try to flee the villages and look for economic opportunities in the mills and factories. In that context, the Bengal situation appears to be more natural. The unwillingness of Bombay millowners to employ untouchables in the early years as well as the availability of "clean" caste Maratha labour might have depressed the proportion of untouchables in the Bombay mills. Resistance on the part of the landowning upper castes to any large-scale abandonment of agricultural activities by the untouchables might also have been a factor.

There were three major groups, then, which constituted most of the emergent industrial labour force : first, the "social rejects", that is, those belonging to the bottom of the society in rural India ; secondly, the traditional artisans who had been 're-ruralized' under the Company rule due to a general decline of their crafts but who could not have owned much land anyway ; and finally, the traditional landless low caste and untouchable groups.

From this it is clear that the emergent workforce in India was overwhelmingly landless and also they were rooted in the village. This latter fact, coupled with frequent allegations about cyclical absenteeism of the workers from their work places during the monsoon months have led to the myth that the Indian worker is "peasant first and worker later." The disproportionate number of males in the migrant working class population further strengthened this belief. It is necessary, therefore, to examine the nature of the rural connection of the non-agricultural workforce in India.

*Nature of the Rural Connection  
of the Industrial Workforce*

Indeed in India, there was nothing like a "mass flight from the land" as in England consequent upon an 'enclosure movement' between seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.<sup>28</sup> The 'enclosure movement' in England which continued with tremendous force from 1760 through 1830 had completely destroyed the medieval peasant community by creating huge mass of "surplus" landless peasants completely divorced from the advantages of traditionally respected common rights and transformed the peasants from 'free-born Englishmen' into "servile and broken spirited Hodges" ready for urban migration and industrial employment. Born out of a close alliance between the bourgeoisie and the landed aristocracy, the enclosure movement by transforming the rural English society beyond recognition had tremendously strengthened the foundations of England's industrial revolution. It had not merely created labourers necessary for industrial employment; by improving agriculture, it helped generate the raw materials without which the wheels would halt. In India, the agricultural and the industrial processes were largely independent of each other, the autonomous colonial state standing between them. The divergent patterns of land settlement, tenancy structures, irrigation systems, revenue collection procedures established throughout the territory under the Raj had affected the rural masses differently and those among them, for whom the conditions became unbearable, started, slowly and gradually, to trickle out of the villages, sometimes with their families but mostly alone, towards centres of non-agricultural employment.

Such departures were neither massive numerically, nor complete psychologically. Most of the migrants were leaving behind a hut and a hearth and to them they were committed to return. Such commitment had proved to be a necessity indeed in view of the severe lack of accommodation facilities in mill and factory areas in Bengal and even more so in Bombay, and further, because of the uncertainty regarding their accommodation beyond their period of service.<sup>29</sup>

And yet, the emergent industrial labourers in India were no birds of passage. Foley's report on Bengal labour, the Royal Commission's (1929) inquires as well as Morris' study of Bombay labour all

confirm that. Foley and Morris both found some traces of seasonal absenteeism which coincided with cultivating season as well as with major festivals.<sup>30</sup> (Of course, in rural India as in most rural societies, festivals mark either the beginning or the end of a cyclical agricultural activity such as sowing or crop-cutting). Yet, Foley's impression was that these workers did not go to participate in actual work of cultivation ; but rather for taking an account of the yield and its proper share for his family members who might have been working in the fields. Besides, such seasonal departures were never very great in number, nor did they affect all the mills. And Morris points out that while there might have been some seasonal departures from factories to fields, there is evidence that during the same months when there was exodus, there was also influx of new people from villages into Bombay so that despite exodus there was never any acute shortage of workers in Bombay during the monsoon months.

The Royal Commission in its *Report* was rather categorical on this point. It said :

- (1) on the one hand, the factory population, generally speaking, is not divorced from the land, as in the West ;
- (2) on the other hand, it cannot be regarded as composed of a mass of agriculturalists serving a short term in industry.

And the Commission reasoned, as we have already pointed out, that the primary reason for retention of the village connection is that "they are pushed, not pulled to the city".<sup>31</sup>

The villager in industry was therefore by no means a landowning peasant intending to buy more land through the accumulation of his industrial wages.<sup>32</sup> Yet his primary intention was saving for remittance home. Foley mentioned in his report that in the district of Saran alone, "the annual value of money-orders cashed every year averages 15 lakhs of rupees, which rose to 34 lakhs in the last famine year, and where besides this, it is calculated that temporary workers bring back with them from Eastern Bengal 22½ lakhs in savings every year."<sup>33</sup> It is surely not improbable that this money helped the families of the workers to repair their rundown homes, or to demortgage their piece of land or even occasionally to buy a small

additional plot. Indeed it was to make living a bit easier that one had left his village home in the first place. Thus, while the village connection was always there, it did not stand in the way of his acceptance of the life of an industrial worker. The village identity was strong, based on social, familial and psychological ties ; but at the same time, he knew that he needed the mill or the factory for his sustenance. Recognition of this necessity soon helped him to develop his new identity, the identity of an industrial worker which in most cases was achieved despite retention of the village identity.\*

### **Smooth Acquisition of an Urban-Industrial Identity**

Yet, one may wonder at the surprising smoothness with which this entire process of physical migration and psychological adjustment to city life and factory system took place in India. We do not find any evidence to date of an Indian equivalent of the Luddite violence to which the artisans and craftsmen of England resorted during the first thirty years of nineteenth century as a response to the "foul Imposition" of *laissez faire* on them.<sup>84</sup> It was no easy matter for the British craftsmen and artisans to reconcile to a "factory system" which replaced the servant and man by the 'operative' and 'hand,' which had imposed on them "the tyranny of the clock," which had brought them to the big city which "destroyed society," and which had thoroughly disorganized the 'moral economy' of the past by the "economic rationality of the capitalist present."<sup>85</sup> As E P Thompson has argued, Luddism's nature cannot be understood by looking at it as a response to the decline in British textile market due to Napoleonic Continental System. It was a protest against the breakdown of the paternalistic order and its value system. The journeymen and artisans felt themselves to be robbed of their constitutional rights and this "deeply-felt conviction" of theirs had the backing of the public opinion. In the value system of the community, those who resisted degradation were in the right.<sup>86</sup> The large

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\* This may sound strange for a British worker, but not so for an Indian worker. Any Indian can combine many identities without suffering any conflict of loyalties. Thus, a Brahmin convert to Christianity does not cease to be a Brahmin ; a modern scientist does not feel the necessity of abandoning superstitions, or a devout Marxist does not feel the compulsion of controlling acquisitive instincts.

employers, and the factory system generally, stirred up profound hostility among thousands of small masters and it was from them that labour radicalism in England "derived ideas, organization and leadership."<sup>17</sup>

In India, as we have noted above, in all probability, the artisans and craftsmen constituted a good percentage of the workforce in the jute and cotton mills in Bengal and Bombay. But we do not find them to act as a radicalizing influence on the working class in general in the sense of providing ideas, or organization or leadership. Nor do we find the erstwhile artisans and peasants to violently reject their new industrial life through such acts as machine-breaking. Strikes were there, but very infrequently strikers would attack and try to destroy mill property or machinery.

Such behaviour on the part of India's artisans and peasants may be seen as abject surrender by a people deeply enmeshed in a traditional social order to a completely new mode of life. But even if this was an abject surrender, the reasons for it were not far to seek. First of all, the craftsmen and artisans had lost their trade early in the nineteenth century, and in consequence, had been compelled to turn to agriculture. R C Dutta in his *Economic History of India* produced enough evidence collected from the Parliamentary papers which substantiate that, this decline in the indigenous crafts and trades were so quick and so universal that by 1837, when Queen Victoria ascended to the throne, "agriculture was left the only national industry of the people."<sup>18</sup>

Thus, when after the 1850s new factories and mills were established with a demand for labour, the craftsmen and artisans who decided to join the rank of labourers were not giving up their crafts under the pressure of a 'factory system,' but were merely getting out of an agricultural system which was already under pressure and held no prospect for them, and to which they were compelled to turn some decades earlier. For them, the question was not one of giving up the status of being their own men ; but rather, of a better alternative, if not the only way, for living.

As for the peasants, the situation was no better. Caste disabilities and inhuman oppression by the upper classes had completely

divested the traditional economy of any moral content. Both Morris and Foley have pointed out that neither in Bombay nor in Bengal caste was an important factor for the mill labourers. While Morris found the data on caste of early mill hands to be unsatisfactory, he approvingly quoted the statement of a factory inspector in 1892 that "refusal of men of one caste to work with those of the other has been singularly rare in the textile trade."<sup>49</sup> Foley also did not find any casteism among the jute mill workers.<sup>50</sup> Therefore, for the village peasants belonging to lower castes factory employment offered a hitherto unknown freedom from caste disabilities rampant in the narrow confines of village life. Further, oppression and exploitation of these classes in the traditional order was so great that even the strongest defenders of that order among the oppressed themselves had nothing to say when challenged by the upholders of the factory system.<sup>51</sup> To them, the traditional economy was anything but a 'moral economy'.

The other potential source of radical influence on the emergent workforce could have been the middle class intellectuals. But this class of men was very much the creation of the administrative and economic systems established in India by the British and hence, they proved to be unable to play the role of a Francis Place or Thomas Paine in the 19th century. A good direct evidence on this point is the collection of one year's issues of *Bharat Sramajibi*, a labour journal edited by a Brahmo intellectual of Calcutta, Sasipada Banerjee. If Banerjee's ideas are at all indicative of the general attitude of this class in Calcutta or India, we must say that it was committed to the creation of a secular working class deeply committed to factory discipline, work ethic, saving and temperance. It looked upon factories as positive and progressive force, breathing new life into the old and dry bones of the landless Indian peasantry.<sup>52</sup>

Of course, the intellectuals could hardly be blamed for such an attitude in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, for the agrarian economy was so completely devoid of any moral foundation that it hardly provided any ground for optimism. Gradually, as the national political movement started to develop by the end of that century, the intellectuals developed a dual attitude to the question of

labourers in industry. As Bipan Chandra has brilliantly depicted, they preferred to ignore the grievances of the workers in industries owned by Indian capitalists while emphasizing their plight in British and other foreign-owned enterprises like plantations and the railways.<sup>43</sup> This trend continued in the following years and was indeed further strengthened when after World War I, on seeing the government ignore the recommendations of the Indian Industrial Commission regarding promotion of indigenous industries in India, the Indian capitalists decided to rally round the Indian National Congress.

Let us conclude very briefly. The above pages have shown that Marx was not wrong in his belief that Indians could change themselves under pressing conditions and adapt themselves to the requirements of a new economic situation created by the process of industrialization. The last quarter of the 19th century and the first two decades of the 20th witnessed tremendous and nearly spontaneous growth of an industrial workforce generally glad to get out of the severe economic crunch and cultural confines (growing out of the caste system) of the rural society. Thus, the raw materials for a politically mobilizable, potentially secular social force was there. What could be done with them depended on the quality and wisdom of the leadership.<sup>44</sup>

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- 2 E J Hobsbawm, *Industry and Empire* (Harmondsworth, 1968), p. 68.

- 3 Morris, pp. 65-9.
- 4 N Mukherjee, "Port Labour in Calcutta, 1870-1953 : Some Trends of Change," ( Simla : Transactions of the Indian Institute for Advanced Study, Vol. 7, 1969 ), p.465.
- 5 Morris, pp. 11-12. 40-1 ; Dasgupta, pp. 315-26; *Report of the Royal Commission on Labour in India* ( Calcutta : Government of India Central Publication Branch, 1931 ( hereinafter RCLR ), pp. 14-16.
- 6 B Misra, pp. 203-28.
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- 8 B Foley, *Report on Labour in Bengal* ( Calcutta : 1906 ), pp. 36-58, esp. p. 58.
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- 11 Ibid., p.209.
- 12 Morris, p.63.
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- 15 P C Patil, *The Crops of the Bombay Presidency* ( Bombay, 1922 ), cited by Charlesworth, p. 122.
- 16 Ibid, pp. 117, 132.
- 17 E. Whitcombe, *Agrarian Conditions in Northern India* ( Berkeley, 1972 ), pp. 61-119 ; Ian Stone, "Canal Irrigation and Agrarian change : The Experience of the Ganges Canal Tract. Muzaffarnagar District, 1840-1900," in Choudhury and Dewey ( eds. ), *Economy and Society*, pp. 86-112. Whitecombe argues that the net effect of the canals on agriculture in U. P. was negative. Stone, contradicting her, claims that on the whole agriculture had improved both in terms of area under cultivation and output resulting in an overall improvement in the conditions both of landowners and labourers. Indeed, Stone says, there was a labour shortage. See also, Ira Klein, pp. 211-13.
- 18 Rajat Ray, "The crisis of Bengal Agriculture, 1870-1927 : The Dynamics of Immobility," *IESHR* 10 ( 1973 ) : 244-79 ; Benoy B Choudhury, "The Process of Depeasantization in Bengal and Bihar 1885-1947," *Indian Historical Review* 2 ( 1975 ) : 104-65.
- 19 B B Choudhury, p. 139.
- 20 Myron Weiner, *Sons of the Soil* ( Delhi, 1978 ), pp. 95-102. Weiner shows how Muslim peasants from East Bengal, especially from Mymensingh

district started to move in thousands into Assam since 1900 and worked miracles with waste lands in the Brahmaputra valley. Mymensingh happens to be one of the most densely populated rural areas in the world with a high rate of fragmentation of land holdings, growing number of landless labourers and marginal farmers.

- 21 See the discussion on recruitment from Bengal districts in Foley, Chap. 7.
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- 23 Irfan Habib, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India* (London, 1963), Chap. 9.
- 24 Barrington Moore, Jr., *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (Boston, 1966), p. 368.
- 25 Dasgupta, p. 320.
- 26 See Macpherson, p. 140 for a contrary view.
- 27 Dharma Kumar, *Land and Caste in South India : Agricultural Labourers in Madras Presidency During the 19th Century* (Cambridge, 1965). She also suggests that possibly the lower castes were prevented by powerful social sanctions from owning or leasing in land so that they could be available for supplying hired labour.
- 28 Hobsbawm, p. 106, and pp. 97-107. See also, Moore Jr., pp. 20-9, and E P Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York, 1963), pp. 223-4.
- 29 The Labour Department's "Notes" of September 1921 in reply to Sir Dinshaw Wacha's question in the Legislative Council on "the provision of dwelling houses for the working classes in India," stated, "The problem is acute in cities like Madras, Cawnpur, Ahmedabad, and specially so in Calcutta and Bombay." Government of India, Department of Industries, File No. L 881(i) - Labour, 1921.
- 30 Foley, pp. 4, 5, 7, 15, 16, 19, 31, 36. Also Morris, pp. 97-100. Morris also emphatically points out that the data regarding absenteeism are defective : pp. 87, 95, 98 (fn. 48).
- 31 *RCLR*, p. 16.
- 32 Of course, we do not have any direct evidence on the point either way. As an indirect evidence it may be mentioned that Choudhury did not find in Bengal recovery of lands once sold by the small holders to be at all significant, primarily because land prices soared very quickly at the turn of the century. B. B. Choudhury, p. 143. Also Dr T M Nair, in his "Minute of Dissent" to the "Report of the Indian Factory Labour Commission" of 1908, categorically rejected the point that high labour turnover in Indian factories was due to their saving a lot of money or becoming peasant proprietors.

- 33 Foley, p. 62.
- 34 Thompson, p. 549.
- 35 Hobsbawm, pp. 83-8.
- 36 Thompson, pp. 247-8. See also, John Foster, *Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution* (London, 1974), pp. 50-2. Foster gives illustrations of violence in Oldham in the late 1820s, the reactions of an "overwhelmingly hostile population."
- 37 Thompson, pp. 193-4.
- 38 R C Dutt, *The Economic History of India in the Victorian Age* (London, 1956), p. 517.
- 39 Morris, pp. 78, 82-3. Morris is of the view that if there was any trace of casteism, it was not of the *Jati* sort, but one based on broad division between the untouchables on the one hand, and all other workers on the other.
- 40 Foley, p. 14.
- 41 The most vivid picture of this conflict between the defenders of the traditional order and the advocates of factory employment within the oppressed peasantry is available in Tara Shankar Bandopadhyay's famous novel, *Hansuli Banker Upakatha* (in Bengali, Calcutta, 1380 B. S.). His picture is of Bengal of the late 1930s. But it gives enough hints about what the situation was like some fifty years before. The following citation is an instance :

"পানু বললে — মুনিব যে গেরে ফেলাইছে তার পিতৃবিধেন কর পাঁচজনায়। 'ধরে  
মারে সয় বড়।' আমাকে মুনিব ধরে নিকে নিলে—আমি কি করব মশায়, তিন  
বছর হিসেব করলে না, ই বছর হিসেব করে বললে—পঁচিশ টাকা পাওনা তোর  
কাছে। দে, ফ্যাল। তা বললাম বছর বছর হিসেব করলেন না—না করে একে-  
বারে একেবারে এমনি মোটা পাওনা কি করে দোব আমি? তা বললে—আমি কি  
জানি? তু শালোদের রোজগারই কি কম? তুমি শালোরা মাঠ থেকে ধান সরাচ।  
ঘর থেকে এনে শোধ দাও। কি করব মশায়, বললাম—আপনকার জমির পাশে  
সরকারী গোপধ ডেঙে যে জমিটুকুল বেড়েছে, সেই টুকুল তো আপনারই হয়েছে—  
তাই দ্বৃণ বলেছিলেন দশ টাকা দেবেন। সেই ল্যান, আর বাঁশবাড় একটা আছে  
ল্যান, লিয়ে আমাকে রেহাই দ্যান, তা সে কি গালাগাল করলে। —ফোস ফোস  
করে কাঁদতে লাগল পানু।

...পানু যে কথাটা বলেছে সেটার সংগে সকলেরই অন্তরের কথার অশ্পতিষ্ঠত যিল  
আছে। বনওয়ারীর মত মাতবর সচল ব্যাস্তর পর্যন্ত মিল আছে। ... পানুর  
কথার উন্তর না খুঁজে পেয়ে সকলে চুপ করেই রইল। কেউ কেউ দীর্ঘ-নিষ্পাসণ  
ফেললে। বনওয়ারীও ফেললে দীর্ঘ-নিষ্পাসণ। ...শুধু করালী বসে পা নাচতে  
লাগল। সে এ বিষয়ে নিশ্চিন্ত মানুষ, চলনপুরে থাটে। নগদানগদ মাইনে, সে  
বলেও ফেললে—মারো ঝাড় চাষের মুখে।

ବନ୍ଦୋପାରୀ ସମ୍ଲେ—ଆଇ କରାଳୀ !

କରାଳୀ ସମ୍ଲେ—ତାବେ ପିତିବିଧେନ କର । ପାନା ସା ସମେହେ ତା ତୋ ମିଥ୍ୟେ ଲୟ ।”  
pp. 297-8.

- 42 One of Sasipada's descriptions of the factory city of Manchester is truly indicative of the very optimistic and positive attitude to the factory system :
- “ମ୍ୟାଣ୍ଡେଷ୍ଟାର ଲକ୍ଷ୍ମନ ନଗରେ ଏକଟିଶ କ୍ଲୋଶ ଦୂରେ ଇରେଲ ନଦୀର ତୀରେ ଅବସ୍ଥିତ । ...ଏହି ନଗରେ ସୃତା ଓ ସଞ୍ଚେତ କରିବାର ଜନ୍ୟ ସେ କତ କଣକାରୀଥାନା ଆହେ ତାହା ଗମନ କରିଯା ଶେଷ କରା ଯାଇ ନା । ...ପାଠକଗମ, ଡୋମରା ସେ ସକଳ ବିଳାତୀବଞ୍ଚ ସଚିବାଚର ପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ କରିଯା ଥାକ ତାହାର ଅଧିକାଂଶ ସଞ୍ଚେତ ଏହି ମ୍ୟାଣ୍ଡେଷ୍ଟାର ନଗର ହାତେ ଆମଦାନୀ ହୁଏ । ...ସୃତା ଓ ସଞ୍ଚେତ କାରିବାରେ ଏହି ନଗରେ ସେ କତ ଉପର୍ଯ୍ୟନ୍ତ ହଇଯାଇଛେ ତାହା ବଲିଯା ଶେଷ କରା ଯାଇ ନା । ଏଥାନକାର ଲୋକ ସର୍ବଦାଇ ବ୍ୟକ୍ତ ପ୍ରାହ୍ୟାଇଁ । ପ୍ରାଯୁ ପ୍ରତୋକ ସରେଇ ମାକୁର ଶବ୍ଦ ଶୁଣିତେ ପାଉଯା ଯାଇ । ସର୍ବଦାଇ ଅଗଗ୍ୟ କଲେ ହାତେ ବାଣି ବାଣି ଧୂମ ଉଠାତେ ନଗର ଧୂମେର ମତୋ କାଳୋ ଦେଖାଇ । ଉଚ୍ଚ ଗୌର୍ବାର ଚଢା ଓ କଲେର ଉଚ୍ଚ ଚିମନୀ ଦ୍ୱାରା ଶୋଭିତ ହେଲା ଏହି ସହର ଦୂର ହାତେ ବଡ଼ ମନୋହର ଦେଖାଇ ।”
- Bharat Sramajibi* (ed. Kanailal Chattopadhyay, Calcutta : Brahma Mission Press, 1975), pp. 84-5.
- 43 Bipan Chandra, *The Rise and Growth of Economic Nationalism in India* (New Delhi : People's Publishing House, 1966), chap. 8.
- 44 For more on this, R. Chatterji, *Working class and the Nationalist Movement in India* (New Delhi : South Asian, 1984)

## THE ROLE OF THE STATE IN URBAN POLICY : A MARXIST PROBLEMATIC

KESHAB CHOUDHURI

IN THE *Manifesto of the Communist Party* Marx and Engels have viewed the early form of urbanism in capitalist nations as a progressive development because it terminated the domination of the moral criteria of the rank society over market activity. Urbanization provided for the regulation of the society by the self-regulating market. It boosted the volume of the total social product and enormously increased the quantity of surplus value in circulation. It prepared the technical and economic base for 'the production of goods through innumerable stages, the proliferation of linkages between and among industries, a tremendous increase in the transactions necessary to produce a finished product, and an enormous increase in the potential for division of labour'.<sup>1</sup> Marx considered the city forming process under capitalism so important that he characterized modern history as 'the urbanization of the countryside'. In the *Manifesto* the authors wrote :

The bourgeoisie has subjected the country to the rule of the towns. It has created enormous cities, has greatly increased the urban population as compared with the rural, and has thus rescued a considerable part of the population from the idiocy of rural life. Just as it has made the country dependent on the towns, so it has made barbarian and semi-barbarian countries dependent on the civilized ones, nations of peasants on nations of bourgeois, the east on the west. The bourgeoisie keeps more and more doing away with the scattered state of the population, of the means of production, and of property. It has agglomerated population, centralized means of production, and has concentrated property in a few hands.<sup>2</sup>

Not only capitalist cities, all cities in history had been geographic concentrations of a social surplus product which the prevailing

economic integrative mode was capable of creating and concentrating. But the former were exceptional in the sense that the type of integrative function they performed through industrialization and the volume of social surplus product they created on the basis of reciprocal cooperation with the countryside were unprecedented in the history of civilization. The penetration of the self-regulating market exchange economy into all facets of social activity produced revolutionary changes. The cities, as centres of commerce and industry, integrated the whole economy, at first on a national and later on an international scale. They acted like magnets ; they agglomerated men and resources and produced more and more surplus value. They functioned as locus for disposing of surplus product. 'Monumental architecture, lavish and conspicuous consumption, and need-creation in contemporary urban society, are all different manifestations of this same phenomenon'.<sup>8</sup> It is precisely this that worked to make the cities in early capitalism centres of civilization and culture. The authors of the *Manifesto* recognized the historic role of these cities under the leadership of the bourgeoisie.

From such a recognition many marxist and non-marxist scholars infer Marx's urbanity. Some of them, even go so far as to frame a 'theory' of an 'urbane Marx'. To them Marx appears as a lover of towns, a hater of the countryside and a staunch believer in the universal urban destiny of man. He never felt, they say, nostalgic about the so-called 'idyllic village life'.

Just as a thorough study of the development of Marx's thought renders the theory of the 'two Marxes' (Young Marx and Old Marx) superficial, a correct understanding of Marx's views on the creation of the social surplus product, the formation of cities and the different forms of linkages forged between the cities and the countryside sees through at once the emptiness of the concept of a Marx deeply in love with capitalist cities and harbouring antipathy towards villages. The industrial cities of the capitalist countries represented to him socioeconomic formations in a definite historical epoch, providing through industrialization and communication networks the necessary stimuli to inter- and intra-regional economic integration of an organic unity. This appeared to him to be essentially a course of development in the direction of progress of mankind. It is not

that he liked the streets of Manchester, London and Paris better than the country roads or that he preferred to breathe city air to country air! He was well aware of the exploitative character of the capitalist society and its cities. City life, no doubt, reflected the glow of the culture-rays of the capitalist civilization ; at the same time, the city also appeared to him to be the home of class struggle between the antagonistic classes. It is here that a self-change of the exploited classes begins to take shape.

The validity of the concept of surplus as it relates to urban origins is admitted by all marxist scholars. But the interpretation of the concept and its utility in finding out the *primum agens* of historical evolution are issues on which they themselves have disagreement. Several materialist versions of the historical evidence of surplus and the subsequent use of that surplus pursue a line of analysis that Marx and Engels categorically disowned.

### Social Surplus and the City

Marxists, marxists of sorts and many non-marxists trace the origin of cities to the geographic concentration of a social surplus product, but the definition of the surplus concept remains 'a slippery one'. Polyani *et al.* opine that a surplus may be taken to represent 'that quantity of material resources over and above subsistence requirements of the society in question'.<sup>4</sup> But doesn't the level of requirements differ from society to society and from one age to the other? Isn't the consciousness of 'requirements' itself a social product? In *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* Marx examines the relations between production, consumption and human needs in the following way : 'Production produces consumptions : (1) by providing the material of consumption ; (2) by determining the mode of consumption ; (3) by creating in the consumer a need for the objects which it first presents as products.'<sup>5</sup> Human needs are, thus, tied to the apron-strings of the mode of production. The mode of satisfying the needs are also determined by the mode of production. Marx is reported to have said : 'Hunger is hunger. But the hunger which is satisfied with cooked meat and fork is another hunger than that which swallows raw meat with the aid of hands, nails and teeth. The mode of production produces, both objectively and

subjectively, not only the object consumed but also the manner of consumption.'<sup>6</sup>

As the society undergoes changes *pari passu* with changes in the mode of production, the purposes for setting apart a part of the material product as well as the quantity of such surplus exhibit corresponding changes. The definition of the term surplus is therefore 'contingent upon the social conditions of production in society.' Not only are there inter-society variations of the surplus concept, there may also be intra-society variations in different modes of production operating simultaneously in the given society. The concept has not only economic connotation, it has ideological content and political meaning as well. Those who appropriate the surplus product have to engage themselves in the defence of the existing system by projecting themselves as benefactors of the society. Should one then regard surplus as that quantity of product over and above what is required to ensure the perpetuation of the society as its members know it is ? If it is so viewed, a surplus becomes at once related to the internal working of a specific mode of production.

Such a view lands the surplus concept on the quicksand of a formless relativism. Marx steered clear of it by relating the concept to a view of the universal human needs of man's survival as a species. His view of the concept runs as a bridge, as it were, between ages, cultures and classes. This view, derived from a juxtaposition of *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* and the *Grundrisse* on the one hand and *Capital* on the other, looks at surplus in two forms. First, it sees surplus as an amount of material product over and above that which is absolutely necessary to reproduce society in its prevalent state. The surplus part of the material product is available for effecting improvements in human welfare. Secondly, surplus may be regarded as an estranged version of the first — it emerged in all hitherto existing societies (with the possible exception of the primitive communistic society of doubtful historicity) as a quantity of material resources appropriated for the benefit of one section of society at the expense of another. As in all preceding modes of production, in the capitalist mode of production also the ruling class appropriates the product of alienated labour.<sup>7</sup>

Many western scholars and marxists of sorts relate the story of urban origins in terms of surplus production. But they do it, violating some fundamental tenets of Marx. There is an attempt on their part to locate primary importance in the institutional and organizational forms for the explanation of the origin of social surplus. For example, Pearson writes : 'there are always and everywhere potential surpluses available. What counts is the institutional means for bringing them to life. And the means for calling forth the special effort, setting aside the extra amount, devising the surplus, are as wide and varied as the organization of the economic process itself.'<sup>8</sup> A different version, but essentially the same content, of this view is found in Wheatley's observation : "A 'social' surplus ... is designated as such by the society in question, and its realization depends on the existence of a locus of power capable of extracting products or services from the hands of its members."<sup>9</sup> Similarly, Adams concludes : 'the transformation at the core of the Urban Revolution lay in the realm of social organization.'<sup>10</sup> In the writings of these scholars it appears that the surplus is always there, it is the existing institutional form that brings it into life. Marx never attached to the institutional or social forms in the superstructure the autonomy such scholars assign to them. Marx never considered that surplus was absolute or that it was causally efficacious in giving rise to urban forms. Again, he never entertained any simplistic or mechanistic idea of surplus. He had a very highly structured view of the manner in which it could be treated as a surplus. Each mode of production creates its corresponding form of surplus in conceptual and material terms ; similarly, it constructs its superstructural form considered necessary to perpetuate it.

Marx and Engels understood that socialist societies would also need some sort of surplus for expanding production, for distribution among the people in general and other such similarly defined purposes. For the advancement of society a certain amount of surplus labour is required, but with the attainment of socialism the socialist surplus no longer remains the product of alienated labour. It loses its class character. Its definition undergoes a fundamental revision. The redefined surplus concept excludes the forms of rent, interest and profit. Its purpose is to highlight what is socially useful labour for the production of *use values* (as

distinguished from *exchange values*) for the present and future generations of the society. On grounds of *theory* a socialist surplus arises out of unalienated labour.<sup>11</sup>

### Social Surplus and Socialist Cities

In the *Manifesto* Marx and Engels followed the line of argument that a socialist society would abolish the historical antithesis between town and country. In this recommendation they were not voicing simply the technocratic view that the cities should have more of the villages in them and the villages should have more of the towns in them. They were diagnosing a fundamental defect of the capitalist society reflected in the rural-urban dichotomy. The economic development experiences of the socialist countries do not in any way suggest that with the transition to socialism the dichotomy is at once satisfactorily resolved. The patterns of surplus circulation in the contemporary world today are so complex and interwoven that the talk of ensuring a parity between town and country appears rather simplistic. No socialist country has seriously attempted at achieving this parity, let alone realized it. Musil, Castells and Lefebvre in their researches have arrived at the conclusion that in the Soviet Union and eastern Europe the dominance of the urban centres had not been converted into any new configuration suggestive of a gradually emerging pattern of circulation of socialist surplus product. It may be a little tendentious to maintain that the same problems of urbanism 'may be found under socialism and under capitalism with the same absence of response'.<sup>12</sup> Still it is substantially true that the urban agglomerations of the socialist countries remain even today somewhat of a standing proof to refute any claim to the realization of the marxist ideal in resolving the historical antithesis between town and country. A certain degree of concentration of investment, however, can hardly be ruled out in a socialist society also. It brings economies of scale, economies of agglomeration, economies of favourable location, etc. This in no way implies that there is any *a priori* reason why a surplus product in a socialist state need be concentrated in selected geographical regions. But the fact is that such concentrations do exist in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries of Europe.

Mao Zedong regarded the tension between town and country as a primary contradiction in the social organization of the people. The contradiction manifested in 'three great differences : between urban and rural areas, industry and agriculture, and intellectual and manual labour.'<sup>18</sup> Since 1957, the Communist Party and the government of the People's Republic of China embarked upon a policy of integrating the cities into the countryside, of augmenting agricultural productivity by 'leaps forward' and of reducing the domination of the intellectuals over the working people. The initial success of the People's Republic of China in initiating a breakthrough in these directions during the Cultural Revolution led many western scholars think that Mao Zedong's marxism was capable of dismantling the institutional framework that perpetuates the historical antithesis between town and country. So, the beginning of an euphoria in defence of Chinese policy, with occasional outright condemnations of Russian policy to heighten the greater glory of Maoist thought vis-a-vis Soviet marxism ! 'Russian policy', wrote Harvey, 'appears to be devoted to perpetuating the historical cleavage between town and country ; Chinese policy seems aimed to resolve it.'<sup>19</sup>

Such optimism did not last long. With more information now available about the Chinese Cultural Revolution and its aftermath it is hardly possible to maintain that China is just on its way to cross the rubicon for arriving at a society of communistic men who are neither village folk nor townsfolk. No one can deny, however, the achievement of China in the decentralization of industry and the diversification of the rural economy. The Chinese can point to considerable efforts in the government in containing urban growth.

Mao Zedong's recognition of the importance of the cities as revolutionary catalysts was reemphasized after the cultural revolution in his insistence that party organization 'should be composed of the advanced element of the proletariat. After the experiment with the urban communes, China hardly 'made any further radical moves to remake the cities.' The 'down-to the countryside movement' as an 'ongoing and effective phenomenon' narrowing the gap between city and country had, to a great extent, lost its momentum.<sup>20</sup> China's industrial revolution remains basically urban and the cities continue to exercise their pull. This is despite the fact China has a

long history of anti-urban bias. The modern history of China is replete with instances of domination by 'treaty-port' colonialists who controlled and shaped nearly all of its cities. The Chinese Communist Party had to assume a belligerent mood towards the cities which served as the home of the bourgeoisie.

Despite an accelerated programme of industrialization and the continued increase in the absolute number of urban dwellers, it is unlikely that China will experience big city growth in the foreseeable future. What is likely to happen as a consequence of the urban policy followed by the present Chinese leadership is that 'many small towns will emerge as bridges between big cities and rural areas'. Chengxiang Chen states that "today one can see small factories, small steel blast furnaces, small coal pits and small hydroelectric power stations in many of the people's communes. Such industries function not only as 'cells' in which technological skill is taught, but also as a stimulus to the growth of small industrial cities. If any of these clusters are favourably located or are blessed with other advantages, they are likely to grow into new industrial centres."<sup>16</sup>

Superficially it may seem that while the socialist countries have so long failed to pursue one uniform consistent marxist policy to eradicate the distinction between the country and the town, the progress of urbanization naturally evolving in the advanced capitalist nations is increasingly effacing such a distinction through megalopolitan form of spatial organization. In reality the distinction has only been obliterated to be replaced by a broader and deeper conflict between developed and developing nations.<sup>17</sup> The internal differentiation in a megalopolis generates a number of irreconcilable antagonisms which plague the different geographical areas in a capitalist country.

Were the authors of the *Manifesto* alive today, they would have found it disturbing that no socialist country has yet been able to abolish the antithesis between the town and the country and that the nature of contradiction they detected between the two in the capitalist countries has undergone significant variations to render their theoretical formulation of town-country relationships appear rather simplistic. It is now rife that marxist scholars address themselves to

the task of theory-building that would adequately explain the new developments in the town-country relationships of the contemporary world.

Since the days of Marx and Engels forms of urbanism have changed enormously corresponding to the changes in the capitalist mode of production. It is possible to demonstrate the differences between the forms of urbanism with which they were acquainted and the newer forms under monopoly capitalism of the advanced industrial nations. Monopoly forms of economic organization and technological innovations in many such nations are active in shaping the contours of what is now called *metropolitan urbanism*. Monopoly capitalism has vastly expanded the scale of urbanism side by side with the expansion of corporate enterprise. The enormous concentrations of surplus value in 'superordinate' institutions (multinationals, large corporations, national governments etc.) today provide the economic foundation for the geographical concentration of people and productive activity in the metropolises and megalopolises of the advanced industrial nations. This concentration is sustained with the maintenance of an elaborate apparatus to protect the hierarchical structure of the global *space economy*; this structure ensures flows from hinterlands to urban centres, from lower centres to higher ones and from all regional centres to the largest centres of capitalist activity.<sup>18</sup>

As conceived by Marx, urbanism as a social form survives in a space economy with price-fixing markets, creating, mobilizing and concentrating social surplus. This remains true today, but the *modus operandi* of the creation, mobilization and concentration has changed so much in a degree in the last few decades of the present century that fresh marxist probes are needed into the domain of urbanization, urban policy and all such related issues. Such probes are as much necessary for comprehending the present nature of national and international class struggles, social movements and the role of the state, as for providing guidelines to the toiling and struggling masses.

The French Communist Party theoreticians and many other French scholars who apply the political economy approach are now engaged in important researches probing deep into the nature of

the State in the formulation and implementation of an urban policy.<sup>19</sup> This paper sets before itself a twofold task: to refer to the problematic of the State in urban policy matters as conceived by French marxist scholars in the context of France and to demonstrate that the urban centres of the developing countries hardly play the role that the cities of Europe played during the early days of capitalism.

## II

### State Intervention and Urban Policy

In the domain of urban policy the intervention by the State is never socially neutral in its effects ; it is not confined to the mere resolution of technical problems of urban development. The marxist understanding of State urban intervention never dissociates class struggle from State urban policy. Ironically though, it seems at first sight that Engels entertained a contrary view. At one place he spoke of the State as an 'independent power *vis-a-vis* society.'<sup>20</sup> On a closer examination of Engels's text it appears that he was referring to the way the State presented itself, i.e., to the fact that the State gave itself the *appearance* of being independent of society precisely in order to enforce the domination of the bourgeoisie. In France the French Communist Party theoreticians and the writers of the 'structuralist' school of marxists who base their work on Althusser's understanding of Marx agree that the State has never complete autonomy from the class struggle. They both reject the view termed as 'State as subject'. Similarly, they both reject the instrumentalist conception of the State in which 'the State is a passive tool in the hands of class or fraction.' They reject any conception of the State in which the State is seen external to the class struggle.

The type of internal relation involved in the intervention between the State and social classes is, however, even today an issue on which marxists themselves do not always have agreement. This is a point on which French Communist Party theoreticians (Jean Lojkine, for example) and non-Party marxist writers (N. Poulantzas is one of them) differ. Poulantzas views the State as an agency which uses urban policy to regulate social contradictions. The State in this view

appears as 'a regulatory apparatus above classes ensuring reproduction in perpetuity of the existing socioeconomic system.'<sup>21</sup> Here policy becomes synonymous with management or regulation of relations between classes.

This view is criticised by Lojkine as functionalist as it fails to show how 'the capitalist state, far from reproducing in innumerable fashions a perfectly lubricated system of regulation, reflects the effects of class struggle and even exacerbates them by condensing them.' He opines that the capitalist State is 'the condensed reflection of the class struggle.' For him such a view preserves the purity of marxism from functionalism. State policy and State intervention do not simply reflect the interests of the dominant class, they do endeavour to pursue the interests of the dominant class in the face of working class pressure. The extent and intensity of the pressure explain the 'Welfare State' measures which are but concessions wrested by the working class. These measures, however, do not essentially run counter to the interests of the dominant class.

The debate between Poulantzas and Lojkine centres round the following pairs of statements : <sup>22</sup>

- 1A The relation between the State and social classes is internal.
- 1B The relation between the State and social classes is external.
- 2A Policies reflect the class struggle.
- 2B State policies are independent of the class struggle.
- 3A State interventions exacerbate social contradictions.
- 3B State interventions regulate social contradictions.
- 4A The State is an 'instrument' capable of being appropriated by the working class.
- 4B The state must be 'smashed' or 'revolutionized'.

Lojkine's view is contained in the statements number 1A, 2A and 3A ; Poulantzas's depiction of his view is 1B - 4A. Poulantzas's view is contained in statements number 1A, 2A and 4B ; Lojkine understands Poulantzas's view to have been summarized in 2B - 3B.

The two pairs of statements contained in 1 and 4 relate to the question of the theoretical nature of the State and the determination

of its policies, and the *political* question of the transformation of the State machinery in the phase of transition from capitalism to socialism. Lojkine and Poulantzas do not really differ in their understanding of the theoretical nature of the State. The dividing line between them does, however, exist. The question of political strategy assumes divergent lines of enquiry. Not only do they indulge in functionalist-instrumentalist accusations, they speak differently on the question of effecting changes in the machinery of the State immediately after the social revolution. Such terms—'smash', 'revolutionize' and 'transform' — acquire different meanings and varying importance in their writings.

Of the remaining two pairs of sentences, 2 and 3, both writers claim to hold 2A. Lojkine, however, thinks that Poulantzas is an adherent of 2B and 3B. The polemic between them on the issue involved is important : it relates to difference between marxism and functionalism. There is no doubt that Poulantzas overemphasizes the cohesive function of the State. He insists that 'the relative autonomy of the State is inscribed in its very structure (the State is a relation), in so far as contradictions as they are expressed and concentrated, in a specific manner, within the State itself'.<sup>23</sup> Lojkine accuses Poulantzas of overemphasizing the cohesive, managerial and regulatory power of the State. His polemical run from the concrete statement in 3B to the theoretical statement in 4B may not be in pursuance of the rules of epistemology. Circumstances decide whether contradictions are going to be exacerbated or regulated by State intervention. A marxist need not accept that contradictions are only exacerbated by State intervention. R. Bhaskar is right when he states that a theory is always based on a series of 'generative' mechanisms or 'structures' which give rise to *tendencies* in concrete reality.<sup>24</sup> The effect of intervention cannot be determined by *a priori* reasoning. On the basis of concrete observation it is possible to argue that State intervention regulates social contradictions. Such a statement is compatible with functionalism ; but it is not less compatible with marxism. Similarly, one may like to argue that state intervention does have a *tendency* to exacerbate contradictions, but to make the accusation of functionalism (2B) on the basis of concrete observation (3B), as Lojkine does, is to be guilty of an important epistemological error.<sup>25</sup>

To Poulantzas, the role of the State is primarily political and this role 'over-determines' the politico-economic and ideological functions. The State plays this role by organizing the political interests of the dominant classes and *deorganizing* the dominated classes. This role may entail, at times, some economic sacrifice on the part of the dominant classes, for example, welfare measures benefitting the dominated classes which, however, help preserve the political power of the former. Thus, the political superstructure has a certain degree of autonomy *vis-a-vis* the economic base.<sup>26</sup>

Lojkine does not disagree with any such formulation that the State has a dual function : that it is engaged in the tasks of maintaining 'the cohesion of the social formation as a whole' and that of 'directly enforcing the domination of the bourgeoisie.' He differs from Poulantzas in his emphasis on State economic intervention as opposed to political intervention or ideological intervention. The State is a participant in the repression or integration of social movements and in the propagation of dominant ideology. But these political and ideological functions emerge from, or are corollary to, the functions of economic intervention. The State, to Lojkine, is not 'an autonomous instance successfully preserving social cohesion.'<sup>27</sup>

The opinion of the two writers on the relation between the State and monopoly capital illustrates their conceptual differences in respect of the State. Lojkine upholds the view of the French Communist Party that the State and monopolies are 'fused' in a 'single mechanism'. Poulantzas does not agree with this view. He treats the State and the monopolies as separate entities. He introduces a problematic that is inclined to grant relative autonomy to the political as related to the economic, but he admits that this autonomy is increasingly being narrowed. As the economic domination and political hegemony of monopoly capital is being overwhelmingly asserted, 'the contemporary State tends more and more to reflect this situation. The play of its relative autonomy *vis-a-vis* the hegemonic fraction, monopoly capital, takes place within far more confined limits than was the case in the past.'<sup>28</sup> Still Poulantzas does not veer round the marxist argument that the power of any 'institution' (for instance, the State) is merely a derivative of the power of the classes which seek control of that institution.

There are important differences between Lojkine and Poulantzas in their analyses of ideology. The latter has a 'structuralist' conception of ideology; it is conceptualized as an objective instance with its own hidden structure. The emphasis on the cohesive function of ideology is also there in his analysis.

Lojkine follows Engels closely in his conception of ideology. Ideologies, to Engels, are 'the more or less direct products of the economic conditions prevailing in a society'.<sup>50</sup> This definition does in no way imply that the dominated classes are 'passive receptors of the dominant ideology.' Lojkine furthers the argument with his statement that ideologies arise from 'class social practices', e.g., experience by the dominated classes of their relations with the dominant classes. Thus, 'political concessions by the latter which affected the economic situation of the former would give rise to an appropriate ideology.'

### Urban Policy and Class Struggle

The notion of urban policy, sociologically speaking, has lent itself to at least three divergent definitions which cause theoretical confusion or misunderstanding in the minds of urban policy framers :

1 Urban policy may be defined as a rational source of urban growth, *a mechanism of State regulation*, designed to solve the technical problems of urban development.<sup>51</sup> Obviously, this definition projects a socially neutral image of the State and State policy, divorced from class struggle (capital-labour contradictions). State authorities in capitalist countries actively endeavour to conceal the links between State policy and the social class that reaps the benefits of such a policy.

Urban policy in the free enterprise, decentralized, market-oriented societies activates the political processes of bargaining, logrolling and coalition-building. Preoccupation with economic achievements provides the impetus for growth. This limits urban planning to 'an ameliorative problem-solving role, which is reinforced by an attitude that accepts the inevitability of a continuation of the processes inherent in the present.'<sup>52</sup> No explicit policy can be expected to guide urban growth.

The belief system in market-oriented societies in respect of policy prescription may be designated as 'incrementalism'. As Charles Lindblom explains it, 'Democracies change their policies almost entirely through incremental adjustments. Policy does not move in leaps and bounds.' The belief system of incrementalism thrives best in societies where decisions are made by individuals and small groups leading to the free interplay of the market forces of demand and supply. That is why north American political science has developed an explicit belief system concerning the process of policy change. The perception of a problem, be it urban or any other, is in no small way influenced by the belief system. The dominant mode of thought in north American thinking on the subject of urban policy prescription is that of incrementalism.<sup>\*\*</sup>

The 'greater radicalism' of western Europe has modified the free enterprise system, extended the area of centralized decision-making with a view to making the market system work to secure several social welfare goals (medicare, education, employment, housing, pensions etc.) in addition to its traditional economic functions. Substantial public sectors alongside elaborate private markets have encouraged pluralism in the west European societies which are characterized by multiparty governments, high levels of development and per capita output and built-in capacity for continued growth. Public investment in urbanization, viewed by many experts as 'a counterpart to private interests', is considered to be a major device for reorienting the competitive drive for the attainment of such social goals as redistribution and equity. Urbanization is guided to certain pre-determined directions. Urban policy in western Europe seeks to resolve contradictions of capital and labour in a way advantageous to the dominant classes, subject to the constraints and limitations imposed by social movements.

Most of the 'third world' States are ill-fitting, sovereign areas where the characteristics of the 'little' societies coexist side by side with some of the features of post-war modernization. The economies in these States are fragmented along geographic, ethnic and modern — versus — traditional lines. They are characterized by 'imperfection of markets and limited development of modern economic institutions, limited industrial development and continued predominance of agriculture, low per capita product and market dependence

on foreign economic relations.<sup>\*\*</sup> The traditional forms of authority and centralized controls in these States have been replaced by military dictatorships, dominant one-party system or landlord-bourgeois parliamentary system. Planning efforts in these countries are in most cases political smoke-screening.<sup>\*\*</sup> Majority of these States have no positive, co-ordinated or complete urban policy. A few of them which follow such a policy willy-nilly end up imitating this or that urban policy of an advanced industrial nation. The urban regions of these States of the third world, through measures undertaken by several international agencies and advanced capitalist nations, are made to serve as hinterland areas of the metropolitan urban centres of the western States dominated by monopoly capital.

Despite the fact that the goals of urban growth policies vary from country to country, all aim at achieving the following common objectives:<sup>\*\*</sup>

- a balanced welfare : attainment of a more 'balanced' distribution of income and social well-being among the different regions of the country as well as among social classes.
- b centralization / decentralization : establishment of a linked set of local and national public institutions which facilitates the adoption of overall growth strategies of the national level and their integration with regional and metropolitan planning.
- c environmental protection : channelization of future growth away from areas or regions suffering from environmental overload towards areas or regions where environmental disruption is minimal.
- d metropolitan development : promotion of preferred metropolitan development through new area-wise governmental bodies, use of special land-use controls, new towns, housing programmes, transportation and works and tax incentives or disincentives.
- e non-metropolitan development : creation of 'growth centres' in hitherto by-passed areas.

2 Urban policy may be defined as a regulatory mechanism for *controlling social contradictions*. In this definition the State is considered to be a regulatory apparatus above classes guaranteeing

the reproduction in perpetuity of the existing socioeconomic system.

3 Urban policy is defined to be an *active reflection* of the class struggle, of the contradiction between capital and labour.

The first two definitions regard urban policy to be a form of regulation, but the technocratic ideology implicit in the former is absent in the latter. Obviously, the first definition enjoys immunity from any marxist influence. Not so is the case with the second. It is not disinclined to lay bare the hiatus between the so-called 'neutrality' or 'rationality' of planning and the class orientation of urban policy that is actually executed. It looks at urban policy and the politics of it as mere managerial devices for regulating class relations.

The third definition is, however, unique in that it regards a State's urban policy as a reflection of class struggle only to the extent that the State does not lessen antagonism by its interventions but on the contrary exacerbates it.

Lojkine speaks of the confusion that may arise because of the two possible interpretations of the term 'urban' according to whether it is referred to mean solely 'the social' as opposed to 'the economic' or whether it is located at the centre of the economic and social relation between the modes of reproduction of capital and labour. Marxists do not as yet have any standard definition of the term 'urban'. The debate on the meaning of the term urban is hardly any quibble over words ; it has important bearings on the role to be assigned to urban policy and urban social movements.<sup>\*\*</sup> It engages the attention of marxists as well as non-marxists because it has important policy implications.

The marxists do not have complete agreement either with the second or third definition. Several marxist theoreticians maintain that the second definition reduces urban policy simply to 'management of the reproduction of labour power' (housing and social infrastructure) and virtually excludes the economic dimension (main roads, major communications and telecommunication networks, heavy industry zones, ports, etc. that comprise the so-called economic infrastructure). In advanced capitalist countries, particularly those where State monopoly capitalism has developed, urban economic

infrastructural development takes place at the expense of the financing of social infrastructure (or the 'accompanying' infrastructure as it is modestly known).<sup>87</sup> In these countries new forms of class struggle are growing against the urban policies pursued under the aegis of the State for securing big gains to the dominant classes or fractions of those classes. Urban social movements may at times curtail the benefits accruing to the beneficiaries or delay the implementation of a particular policy or even stall it. But the State cannot but have an urban policy without any reference to the interests of the dominant class or classes. It is never neutral, its actions are never above classes.

That the beneficiaries of an urban policy are not the 'whole' people but the dominant classes or their fractions is a hypothesis, tested and found valid, in a number of important marxist researches conducted recently in France.<sup>88</sup> The marxist problematic in urban policy does not relate to the identification of the beneficiaries and sufferers, it concerns itself with the nature of class struggle involved in the formulation and implementation of an urban policy in a capitalist society and the precise ways in which the beneficiaries are favoured. It has not yet been resolved. But some of the important researches in France sharing a marxist perspective have already provided rich material on which to build a scientific approach to deal with it adequately.

These researches have all taken for granted a particular development within marxist theory — the theme of State monopoly capitalism.

### **State Monopoly Capitalism, Urban Policy and the State**

State monopoly capitalism is defined as the offspring of simple monopoly capitalism; it draws its vitality from the combination of the power of the monopolies and that of the State into 'a single mechanism'. A key role in the theory of State monopoly capitalism is played by capital advanced by the State at a nil or below average rate of profit. This capital is called (completely or partially) 'devalorized', i.e., not seeking its own self-expansion. Marx has nowhere used this term, but this can be treated as a follow-up expression of

his discussion on overaccumulation of capital and responses to it. He has used phrases such as capital lying 'completely or partially idle' and capital having to 'give up its characteristic quality as capital'.<sup>59</sup> The theory of State monopoly capitalism argues that the State intervention is a means of counteracting the falling tendency of the rate of profit and the overaccumulation of capital. This is done by advancing devalorized capital in different sectors of the economy (building industry, spatial planning, etc.) to maintain average profit at a higher level than it would be without its assistance to the industrial capital seeking profit. Since the State and monopoly capital are united in one mechanism the policy of the State is sure to serve the interests of monopoly capital. Devalorized capital has a discriminatory effect on capital in self-expansion : it augments the relative rate of profit of monopoly capital as compared to non-monopoly capital.<sup>60</sup>

Urban policy of a capitalist State is multidimensional. The spatial dimension of such a policy is of fundamental importance in view of the fact that capitalism has to use the agglomerative capacity of space to bring together capital and labour power. At the level of developed or advanced cooperation (i.e., the stage of large-scale industry) space performs the function of agglomerating material productive forces as well as human resources. Space is of crucial significance in the organization of local labour markets. But, space may also be regarded as an obstacle to the 'normal' development of capitalism.<sup>61</sup> It stands for a social relation : it provides for private ownership and 'the monopoly of access to useful agglomeration effects'. It is the power of a specified social category, landowners, to withhold the 'use-value' contained in it.

Marx's analysis of landed property in the capitalist mode of production identified three agents : the landowner, the capitalist farmer and the labourer. To him the capitalist form of landed property, as compared to the earlier forms, represented a step forward because it was divorced from 'relations of domination and servitude' and from 'land as an instrument of production'. Land in this form became only a source of ground rent 'which he (the land-owner) collects by virtue of his monopoly from the industrial capitalist, the capitalist farmer'.<sup>62</sup> The contradiction in this form

lay in the fact, Marx contended, that 'the improvements incorporated in the soil (by the capitalist farmer) become the property of the land-owner'. The leasehold system was, therefore, considered by him to be 'one of the obstacles to the rational development of agriculture'.<sup>48</sup>

On the basis of this argument it is possible to explain the conflict between landed property and industrial capital over the share of surplus value assuming the form of ground rent (accruing to landed property) and the share partaking the form of profit to industry. This contradiction is undoubtedly an inheritance from the pre-monopoly, classical days of capitalism. Another contradiction between the different uses of social capital reveals itself as capitalism matures. Many cities exhibit a glaring contradiction between the share of social capital utilized for financing the agglomeration of material productive forces (industrial estates, road and rail links between firms etc.) and the share devoted to that of human productive forces (housing, schools, public transport facilities, etc.). A further contradiction, one between the two types of agglomeration at the level of space itself, may emerge with the direct or indirect subordination of the reproduction of labour power to that of capital.

These contradictions are found in all capitalist countries but the structural transformations of the capitalist mode of production seem to have modified their content in so far as a split has occurred in many capitalist countries within the capitalist class between monopoly capital and small and medium capital, as *to the mode of use of space as a use value*.

Jean Lojkine thinks that the change is reflected in two developments of recent origin : a new degree of spatial and temporal mobility of monopoly capital and new forms of social and spatial separation of the economic functions of the big firms. The first development manifests in a whole series of contradictions<sup>49</sup> among 'users' of space :

1 a contradiction between the spatial mobility of the big firm operating on a multinational level, for which a particular region or area is only one among many possible locations, and the local firm whose very existence is subordinated to the use values of regional space (particularly its communications infrastructure, and labour market).

2 a contradiction between the temporal mobility of the big firm for which investment in a given region or area is short-term and the virtual immobility of small and medium capital 'tied' in the place of its origin.

3 a contradiction between the period for which public investment to finance so-called 'reception' collective infrastructure for the firm is tied up and the period of operation of a particular economic unit of a gigantic firm.

The new forms of separation and specialization of economic functions within big multinational firms run counter to the local requirements of small and medium-sized firms, inter-industry exchanges and economies of scale. Pierre Boussard's study of the operations of the giant electronics group (A.O.I.P.) in the small industrial area of Brittany reveals that the firm's head office, administration and skilled manufacturing jobs are all concentrated in Paris, while the local assembly factory at Guingamp employs a vast majority of unskilled workers. The result is that the firm has 'no multiplier effects : none of its purchases are made within the region. It has no polarization effect : no local factory does subcontracting work for it. It has no acceleration effect : its presence is not bringing about investment in local firms. Finally, it has no complementation effect : it is content with the infrastructural investment made by the local authorities.'<sup>45</sup>

Monopoly capital, guided as it is by the considerations of profit, may work to reinforce regional underdevelopment and over-concentrate command activities in the metropolitan centres. This dysfunction may take place in any capitalist state where monopoly capital, indigenous or foreign, is allowed to pursue its own logic of development.

### III

#### **State Intervention and Urban Policy in Developing Countries**

By and large, the class forces operating at the administrative level in the third world countries do not encourage the adoption of a

coherent urban policy. In most of these countries the work of administration is done by persons belonging to the so-called middle classes which can hardly withstand the pressure of the bourgeoisie and/or the feudal classes in matters of State policy. The legislative councils, civic bodies like the corporations and municipalities do not abound in representatives from the dominant economic classes, but these classes can always compel or influence the national regional and local governments, when they so intend, to veer round a policy preferred by them. Urban policy in the third world countries is a response to the problems of the national economy which create imbalances of gigantic proportions between the limited number of towns and cities and the vast countryside. The interests of landed property and industrial capital find ways and means to become the beneficiaries of the urban policy adopted by the State.

Whatever urban policy is adopted, it remains, however, in its very nature 'unconscious, partial, uncoordinated and negative.'<sup>46</sup> It is unconscious because the people who implement it are unaware of its features, implications and proportions. It is partial because it concerns itself with a limited number of objectives, the exclusion of some very vital ones impede the success of the ones envisaged. It is often uncordinated because the objectives of national planning with their emphasis on economic development and the aims of urban planning with their primary concern for physical planning produce a disjunction that often leads to the birth of competing policies.

A romantic petty-bourgeois attitude toward urban development works against the formulation of an adequate urban policy in most of the third world countries. In India, for example, intellectual and political thinking, with Gandhian and Nehruite influences on it, has for a pretty long period entertained a persistent and powerful anti-urban ideological theme.<sup>47</sup> No wonder, the expression 'urban development' finds no place in any of the three Lists of the Constitution of India ; the omission obviously works at the root of 'the complexity and confusion of responsibility in centre-state relations in the field of urbanization generally'. The overwhelming majority of the 'peasant politicians' in the state legislatures of India acts as a brake on the motive force of assigning a top priority to the framing of an adequate urban policy. Their ideological perspectives work

'to divert, retard or stop urban growth and in particular to inhibit the expansion of metropolises and primate cities'.<sup>48</sup> The legislators and administrators in India find it inconvenient to accept the view of planning technocrats in respect of the mode of solving the problem of demographic concentration and search for a remedy in the slogan of revitalization of the village economy.

Cities of the third world countries, representing the plantation-mining-and-manufacturing sector, stand in a kind of quasi-colonial relationship with the countryside characterized by their peasant-agriculture-and-handicraft sector. Even today they function no better than 'transplants' with much more intimate economic ties with the urbanized societies of the west than with the countryside.<sup>49</sup> They continue to grow not because of industrialization, but despite the lack of it. Population explosion and internal migrations can only lead to a city life that witnesses a total collapse of cultural and economic identity, an abyss of squalor and misery beyond computation. The third world urban system is a blocked system with populations exploding, capital-intensive technologies in labour-rich societies without any outlets for migration. The cities in the third world being the home of the bourgeoisie, cannot but force the State to respond to the most obvious 'emergencies'. The responses because of their very nature appear ill-conceived to put an end to the various manifestations of urban and regional imbalance. In Calcutta hundreds of crores of rupees are being spent to construct an underground metro railway system which is likely to strengthen the existing imbalance in the structure of transport network. It is at the periphery of the Calcutta Metropolitan District that the transport problems of today and tomorrow are likely to be more severe. Paradoxical though it may seem, an improved urban transport system may well further encourage the movement of people into the city, and worsen rather than improve the overall situation.

In the Anglo-Saxon and north European countries urban social movements, functioning within clearly defined ideological limits, concerned themselves with the 'social' sphere, leaving the 'economic' sphere to the capitalist entrepreneurs.<sup>50</sup> Monopoly capitalism today in the advanced capitalist societies reverses this 'division of labour' and uses to its advantage the slogan of the old social

democratic ideology : 'change the city in order to change society.' In the third world the bourgeoisie and/or the landlords, in the absence of strong urban social movements, find it easier to influence the bureaucratic State apparatus and the local authorities for devising policies preferred by them.

The State in the third world countries hardly resembles the functionalist State engaged in the work of socio-political regulation above classes. Despite official declarations to the effect that it is functioning in the pursuit of the long-term goal of preserving the cohesion of society as a whole, it serves the interests of the dominant classes or their fractions at the cost of a few immediate concessions granted to the dominated classes.

The working class parties in the third world have not been able to assume a leadership role in urban social movements. They have fought for the economic demands of the workers within the workplace without linking them to the 'social' demands related to the reproduction of labour power (housing, transport, health, educational and cultural facilities, etc.). In the absence of such a link-up, the State-appointed bureaucrats, urban planners, experts, consultants and such other persons virtually enjoy an uninterrupted kind of freedom in devising and implementing urban policies. With their background of education and training (more often than not in capitalist countries of the west), it is expected of them to assume a functionalist and technocratic view of the State and seek to solve the problems of the city without any thought given to the socioeconomic demands of the people of the region in which the city is located. Their class background ensures their subordination to the dictates of the dominant classes.

The working class parties in the advanced capitalist countries of the west which have been in the forefront of urban social movements are gradually learning that the problems of the city do not concern the city alone, they involve the entire region. The P.C.F. (Parti Communiste Francais) has in recent years lent support to the regional approach for solving the city's problems. It has abandoned what it calls a fragmented approach and opted for a 'global framework within which partial demands can be placed and which embodies our views on all aspects of the problem.'<sup>1</sup> This theme

of regional approach, originally formulated by Georges Marchais, had been the keynote of the 1974-conference on national urban policy organized by the Isere section of the P.C.F. and the journal *La Nouvelle Critique* and attended by one thousand local councillors, political and trade union militants, planners, architects, and research-workers belonging to the P.C.F. and Parti Socialiste.<sup>58</sup>

While the working class parties in western Europe are increasingly realizing the importance of urban social movements in their fight against the domination of the bourgeoisie over urban space and urban economy, their counterparts in the third world have not as yet approached the threshold of such a realization. The latter are yet to comprehend fully the nature of class struggle taking place in the domain of urban policy ; they are to realize that the 19th-century bourgeois drive for industrialization and urbanization in Europe, if made available to the third world countries today, would not produce the same social effects in the 20th century.

Time is now ripe for undertaking theory-oriented marxist researches relating to the role of the State in urban policies of the developing countries. It is only in the light of these researches that the beneficiaries from such policies and the nature of class struggle in urban areas can be identified.

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## MARXISM AND URBAN CONFLICTS UNDER CAPITALISM

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URBAN LIFE IN capitalist societies is inherently problematical. The urbanization process and urban planning in these societies are embedded in, and derive out of, the overarching capitalist social formation. Conflicts in urban life such as those over housing, land use, slum clearance, transport and so on are all based in the fundamental class antagonisms inherent in capitalist social formation. But these urban conflicts usually transcend the traditional concepts of class struggle ; especially in advanced capitalist societies the shape and course of socioeconomic confrontations no longer coincide with traditional notions of class struggle. The urban conflicts affect heterogeneous elements in society, and it becomes difficult to find solutions to these conflicts. Urban planning makes its historical appearance as a structural intervention by the state in order to deal with the in-built predicaments of the capitalist urbanization process which derives out of the capitalist mode of production.

### **Capitalism Shapes Urban Form**

An insight into the historical evolution of the urbanization process in the capitalist societies would reveal that the industrial cities in the west emerged as direct consequence of the growth of industrial capitalism as a dominant mode of economic organization. As economy shaped both polity and society, cities became the abused by-products of industrial development achieved under the leadership of national bourgeoisie.<sup>1</sup> Labourers concentrated around production facilities and urban congestion became inevitable. As a matter of fact, people tend to move wherever jobs are available. That is to say, in capitalist society the decisions taken by capitalist-elite sections about the location of job opportunities contribute significantly to

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population movement and urban growth. Urban sprawl is therefore a direct consequence of the pattern of job creation by capitalist employers, which is combined with uncontrolled land speculation by the self-interest of developers, builders, engineers and construction unions, and often subsidized by government at all levels. In these urban sprawls major typical urban conflicts relate to housing *vis-a-vis* urban congestion and blight, unemployment, commuting and transport, land-use *vis-a-vis* urban renewal. Urban conflicts to get better housing or cheaper transport are only a part of a much more comprehensive conflictual movement to establish an alternative social system. These conflicts can be adequately interpreted and evaluated only in the context of the comprehensive dialectical reproduction process.

According to Marx, a significant part of the surplus value produced by the workers is reinvested by the capitalist in order to increase production. Because of competition with one another, individual capitalist units are obliged to embark on the process of accumulation and therefore have to increase labour productivity and exploitation margins and thereby reduce the production costs of goods. This accumulation process is a long-established historical one. A social system based on this kind of production process is bound to be divided, and the division of society ultimately takes place between the capitalist (exploiter) and the workers (exploited). The conflict between these two mutually-opposed interest groups is the main dialectical characteristic of all capitalist social formations. These two classes are complementary and yet have contrasting interests. The nature of conflict remains the same but the forms of conflict between these two classes undergo changes with changes in the conditions of capitalist accumulation. Today in all advanced capitalist societies a large number of interest groups have come to exist, and these groups have a collective role to play in the process of capital reproduction.

These are closely linked by a series of complementary social relations of exploitation. As capitalism passes onto an advanced stage of its development, exploitation takes place through the general reproduction process founded on these links. Marx was aware of this phenomenon.<sup>8</sup> As conflict intensifies because of exploitation,

the capitalist state intervenes with great force and in big dimension to ensure the continued operation of the accumulation process. The reactions of the capitalist state to the crisis of the urban system are determined by the contradiction that the state, as the necessary guarantor of the process of creating surplus value, supports and itself implements the crisis-producing re-structuring process.<sup>8</sup>

### **Urban Policy Planning**

If urban conflicts are studied in an isolated way, social reality would appear in a distorted manner. Taking a myopic view of the origins and nature of urban conflicts would be an invitation to the trap of structural-functional explanation. Conflicts never arise in isolation ; these are rooted in clash of interests. In urban development processes going on in capitalist societies the clash of interests basically takes place between those who wield socioeconomic and political power for shaping the production process and those who suffer under this process. All urban conflicts must therefore be understood in terms of class controversies over reproduction of capitalist societies.

Traditional urban studies, done by Max Weber and the Chicago school of urban sociology, have emphasized the pragmatic analysis of specific historical features and have therefore missed the general theoretical dimension. Max Weber attempted a historicist typology of cities.<sup>4</sup> But he has failed to explain the causal origins of urban conflicts and adequately analyse the nature of the urban crisis. He preferred to see the urban system or the city as an isolated phenomenon and did not relate it with the total social phenomena of which it is a partial manifestation. Hence in Weberian analysis the historical dimension of urban problems and conflicts was inevitably lost. Similarly Louis Wirth, one of the best spokesmen of the Chicago school of urban sociology, developed a wrong view of the urban phenomenon.<sup>5</sup> He defined the city in purely sociological and ecological terms, and saw it as a permanent human settlement characterized by three key structural features, viz. large size, high density, and social heterogeneity. Each of these three factors was seen by him to be exerting influences in determining the nature of urbanism as a way of life. He viewed all psychological, political,

and social problems as consequences of *ecological* changes in urban spatial structure, and he believed that such problems could be alleviated by *cultural* means. He advocated rational comprehensive planning on a wider scale for controlling socioeconomic forces and pattern of land-use in the metropolis. And in order to reconcile planning with democracy he recommended citizen participation in urban planning. In his scheme of things the urban planners were visualized as helpers, and citizens as decision-makers. By assigning this role to people inhabiting big urban centres — metropolises or megalopolises — and placing his faith in the collective capacity of people to decide upon the working of socioeconomic forces and patterns of land-use, Wirth sounds almost Rousseauistic. He believed that once the ecological and demographic imbalances could be corrected through urban planning, the city would be a good place to live in. He preferred planning to politics, consensus to conflict. But this is exactly where he betrays his lack of comprehension of the nature of urban living and urban conflicts. His most glaring failure seems to lie in his incomprehension of the fact that political conflicts and community organization are often the only means available to organize the interests of the lower strata of society into politics. Since planning is inherently a political process, this oversight cannot be ignored.

Wirthian urban sociology, upon which much urban land-use planning is based, theoretically seeks to correlate spatial forms to social relationships and leads to the conclusion that physical environment determines the cultural patterns of human communities. This kind of analysis does not provide a universally valid set of variables for understanding the nature of "urbanization" process and the meaning of "urban" culture.<sup>6</sup> The theory of society implied in Wirthian urban sociology can serve as a powerful depoliticizing weapon in the hands of policy-makers and planning elites. As Castells points out, "such a theory is extremely useful to ruling political elites inasmuch as it conceptualises social organisation as depending less on social data, in particular class relations, than on natural, spatial, technical, and biological data."<sup>7</sup> In advanced capitalist societies environmental engineering and technical jargon are used to de-politicize urban planning, including land-use control and zoning regulations. The ecological experts and scientists

endlessly reap their forebodings about the urban doom by means of various alarming cliches and difficult-to-understand expressions. In the process intelligent common people are led to surrender to the 'esoteric' wisdom and skill of urban policy planners.

The real point to note is that urban planning is a value-laden activity. Value choices affect what urban planners define as "problems": the type of data they gather, the standards they use for interpreting their data, and the very aims of their research and analysis. The whole outlook on urban planning and development in the western capitalist countries is shaped by a sort of coalition of social forces: the coalition between finance capital (e.g. banks, trust companies, and other lending institutions) and real estate interests (e.g. landlords, land developers, construction companies and others). The sole goal of this coalition or "class monopoly" is to extract enormous super profits or what David Harvey has called "class-monopoly rents"<sup>8</sup> from the mass of people who need and use urban land. The experience of all capitalist countries in the west<sup>9</sup> and also of developing countries in the Third World following the capitalist path of development shows<sup>10</sup> that this class monopoly or coalition of forces engaged in urban planning and development destroys old neighbourhoods, compels ethnic groups to live in sub-human conditions of ghettos or bustees, and pushes the unwilling middle-class population into high-rise, sterile apartments. The functioning of this class monopoly coalition in urban areas thus leads to de-humanization of the city in the pecuniary interest of the ruling class. That is to say, urban development process is manipulated by this coalition of class monopoly, and social relations in the city life are generally dichotomized into relations between exploiters and exploited.<sup>10</sup>

The hypothesis of "manipulated city" seems to be a well-argued refutation of the marginalist, neo-classical (liberal) economics which uses the doctrine of universal harmonies as an ideological smoke-screen for masking the exploitative social relations of modern capitalist society. The assumptions of the liberal economists that urban land is a commodity like any other commodity and that the price of urban land is determined through the effectiveness of the market mechanism are both found to have no connexion with reality in capitalist societies.

The theoretical weakness of the liberal economics is further revealed in its naive view of the state as a disinterested referee standing above society and intervening only when some abstract, formalistic criterion of social optimality requires it. The truth is that the rationality of the state is derived from the rationality of civil society within which the state is historically embedded. But the critique of manipulated city also seems inadequate. It overemphasizes the role of finance capital and real estate development and does not take note of the role and *raison d'être* of capital in the whole process of urban development in capitalist society. Real estate development, with the help of finance capital, is a capitalist branch of production like any other branch of production and is subject to the same general, overaching capitalist structure and logic. It seems therefore necessary that any analysis of urban land and property development processes must begin with an analysis of late capitalism as a general structure.<sup>11</sup>

### Nature of Urban Conflicts

The nature of urban conflicts varies between and within different societies. In the United States, conflicts take place between down-town and neighbourhood, landlord and tenant; and within neighbourhood, there are conflicts between ethnic and income groups. In European countries, where the public authorities play a significant role in housing and land markets, conflicts are very common in squatters' movements. The conflicts are intense among political parties for capturing the apparatus of "the local state" and among upper classes and working class for possession of urban land. The developing countries in the Third World following the capitalist path of development experience similar conflicts over rights on urban land and demands for investment.

Conflict is inevitable between two purposes for which urban land is used under capitalist system viz. (a) as a vehicle of capital accumulation, and (b) as residential location of the mass of the people. There is an inherent conflict between these two types of the use of urban land and this conflict expresses itself through volatile urban protests. The problem of encroachment into public lands and squatters' settlement therefore appears the commonest problem in



urban areas throughout those countries where capitalism faces some challenges from organized working classes. On occasions this conflict assumes serious dimensions and the capitalist state is forced to intervene in favour of capital accumulation : the pattern of land-use is determined accordingly. The state operates in the capitalist economy within the limits of the accumulation laws and contradictions. This is seen in the difficulties experienced by the states trying to overcome capitalist anarchy through the instrument of planning. Because of the contradictions of a capitalist economy functioning within the frame of liberal democracy, state intervention sometimes becomes necessary in favour of the use of urban land for residential purposes of the mass of working class people. But this action of the state again produces its own contradiction in that increased public expenditure would be necessary, which would imply inflation and fiscal crises. The central, regional and local government machinery would then have to think of further planning. In fact, today it would be wrong to view the fiscal crises of large cities as isolated phenomena. These crises are products of the general crises of the late capitalism and its accumulation process.<sup>1\*</sup> The capitalist use of land reflects various contradictions which originate from the exploitative character of its social organization. Urban conflicts in capitalist society represent a feature of the general reproductive process of capitalism.

The real nature of urban conflicts in capitalist society is determined by the collective production process. It seems wrong to view the elements of urban conflicts as expressed through poor housing, segregated areas, minimum transport facilities with high fare structure, high taxation to support low level of public services and so on as a set of collective consumption relationships. The working class seeks to fight against these typical problems of urban living in capitalist countries and naturally conflicts arise. Urban conflicts are therefore basically the manifestations of class confrontation.

The built environment in urban areas has also been described as a socio-ecological system, suggesting that "the built environment is a result of conflicts, taking place in the past and in the present, between those with different degrees of power in society."<sup>1\*</sup> Those who wield the levers of economic powers control the use of urban

land, and by doing so these people act as the "gate-keepers" of the urban system. These people, in their turn, establish a working relationship with the group called the "managers" of the urban system comprising local government leaders and officials, builders, estate agents and those who determine the distribution and allocation of the scarce urban resources like land, housing and other amenities.<sup>14</sup> But this theory of managerialism, even though correct in its description, fails to identify the inherent reason of urban conflicts. This managerialist interpretation does not take into account the role of the state, and becomes faulty on this account. The modern state in capitalist society has become enormously powerful and this power is used to maintain the capitalist accumulation process. Urban conflicts constitute an aspect of the total process contradictions inherent in the working of capitalism. Urban government machinery and urban development agencies function as agents of the capitalist state apparatus in order to safeguard private property and individual initiative. Investments made by the local state for urban renewal programmes primarily aid the process of capital accumulation ; but people in general are to bear the cost of these investments in urban development. The result is a first-class fiscal crisis in the management of urban areas.

Today the problem is not only national in scale and dimension ; it has become international. The reproduction process, especially in the Third World countries, is tied to the needs of international capitalism. A new stage of urban planning and development is clearly discernible : it is shaped by general world-wide political and economic tendencies.<sup>15</sup>

When Marx developed his theory of capitalist accumulation in the nineteenth century, the urban phenomenon in its present dimension did not exist. But the intellectual tool that he supplied is still found handy to analyse and understand the complex phenomena of urban conflicts under capitalism. There are differences in the details of analyses presented by different schools and authors of marxist disposition, but broadly speaking marxian analysis has proved its usefulness in unravelling the nature and characteristics of urban conflicts under capitalism. Marxism teaches that it is analytically wrong to view the urban sector as an autonomous object of social

science inquiry. For understanding urban conflicts what needs to be analysed is the general process of capital reproduction and the role of the state in the management of urban conflicts.

Marx further held that the dynamics of the capitalist mode of production was capitalism's tendency to generate new desires and needs, and thus new "markets". He described this creation of false needs as "commodity fetishism" which, according to him, undermined the sense of human relatedness motivating social actions toward social justice, community fellowship, and creative work. The stimulation of false needs affects human behaviour by encouraging individual acquisitiveness and aggrandisement. Different kinds of urban conflicts can be seen as products of this aggrandisement born of acquisitiveness engendered by the capitalist system of production.<sup>16</sup>

### Conclusion

It is thus clear that city's repressive characteristics do not derive from its physical and social structure, but they are the necessary corollary of unequal distribution of the costs and benefits of capitalist economic growth. The spatial segregation is duplicated with urban areas also in the form of functional differentiation between central business district (CBD), industrial suburbs, bed-room communities, slums and ghettos. Urban conflicts therefore do not pertain to any specific crisis of the city but are symptoms of a general crisis of development of advanced capitalist societies. This seems to be the logical conclusion which emerges inevitably from Marx's contribution to the methodology of social science inquiry and its application to the study of urban conflicts under capitalism.

### NOTES AND REFERENCES

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- 10 Stephen Gale and Eric G Moore, eds., *The Manipulated City* (London ; Methuen, 1975).
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## *BOOK REVIEWS*

Kanailal Chattopadhyay, BRAHMO REFORM MOVEMENT (1858-1883), Papyrus, Calcutta, 1983, 200 pp., Rs. 60.00.

The Brahmo Reform Movement has always been a subject of lively controversy, right from its very birth. Today, the Brahmos are no longer a significant social or religious force in our country — hence the heat of the debate no longer exists. But historians still argue among each other whether the Brahmo Reform Movement was indeed a progressive, modernizing force in Bengal and India in the previous century and, if so, to what extent. Was the Brahmo Reform Movement a homogeneous movement or were there conflicting trends within its womb ? These questions are still being debated by scholars — both Indian and foreign.

The slim 200-page volume on this theme by Dr Kanailal Chattopadhyay, a well-known scholar on the radical trends in our reform movement of the nineteenth century, is, indeed, a welcome addition to the afore-mentioned debate.

Although, the leaf-page of the book mentions the period under review to be 1858 to 1883, the opening chapter is a critical evaluation of the socio-religious reform activities of Rammohan Roy. That was perhaps inevitable.

The author hits the nail right on the head, when he states : “one has only to read Rammohan’s works on social reforms to realise that most of it deals with one aspect or another of man’s inhumanity to women in Bengal. The conclusion was obviously that by freeing women and by treating them as human beings, could Indian society free itself from social stagnation” ( pp. 13-14 ). Rammohan’s crusade against *Sati* and his passionate advocacy for the emancipation of Indian women, has not lost relevance perhaps even today in 1986, when news of bride-burning still hits the headlines ! The author however, is not uncritical, for in the concluding part of

the chapter on Rammohan, he bluntly declares that Rammohan's "horizon was restricted by the class outlook of the elite" (p. 25).

However, the most interesting part of the book is to be found in chapters IV, V and VI. In chapter IV the author discusses the activities of Sasipada Bannerji and other Brahmo reformers who took up the cause of the oppressed working class. The author approvingly quotes from Sasipada's editorial in *Bharat Sramajibi* in Pous 1879 that "All men are born equal. ... The rich are only a handful, but you are the majority and the country is yours." However, the author also warns : "Sasipada, despite his passionate attachment to the cause of the working people of India, spread among them a faith in the positive aspects of British rule in India. Herein lies the weakness of most of the Brahmo Reformers ..." ( p. 106 ).

In chapter V, the author takes up the highly interesting character Dwarkanath Ganguli, who together with his friend, the Brahmo Acharya Ramkumar Vidyaratna, risked his life, penetrated deeply into the Assam tea gardens and exposed, through a series of seathing articles in *Sanjibani* and *Bengalee*, the atrocities perpetrated by the British tea planters and their Indian hirelings. The *Brahmo Public Opinion* and the weekly *Sanjibani* gave them solid support and the conscious elements among the Bengali middle class woke up to the given realities of the so-called tea-coolie question (chapter V, p. 107-136).

In chapter VI, the author has discussed the contribution of radical Brahmos, specially of Krishna Kumar Mitra and his *Sanjibani*, to national awakening in Bengal and India. Krishna Kumar, as the author correctly points out, developed from a "radical Brahmo to a fervent nationalist" (p. 160). But why did the later Brahmos, fail to keep pace with the rising tempo and sweep of our national struggle for freedom ? No indication of that is available in the treatise of Dr Kanailal Chattopadhyay. This is a signal weakness of the volume. But then, perhaps, the author having stopped at 1883, has left such conclusions in store for a future volume.

V Khoros, POPULISM : ITS PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1984, 294 pp. Price not stated.

Populism today broadly refers to the unstructured ideology underlying the political regimes in the newly liberated countries. More specifically, it is their search for identity that is generally described as populism. Any scholarly attempt, therefore, to trace and explain the roots as well as the character of populism in the countries of the third world is praiseworthy although, admittedly, the task is somewhat challenging. The sprawling literature on the subject testifies to it and the present work, although controversial in places, is a welcome addition. In fact, a careful scrutiny of the book immediately makes the reader aware of certain interesting features that run through the work. In the first place, the author has attempted a scientific appraisal of the voluminous writings on the subject which have come up in the west in recent years. Secondly, the reader is made familiar with the debates that are going on among the Soviet scholars on the subject and the author has, on occasions, explicitly stated his differences with other academicians working in the area. The approach of the author is thereby quite refreshing, free from any dogmatism.

Initially, in the Introduction and Part I of the book the author raises certain interesting methodological questions which deserve attention. Populism, Khoros argues, reflects the contradictions that are inherent in the politico-ideological processes of the newly liberated countries. Populism is marked, for instance, by its simultaneous inclination towards traditionalism and modernism, radicalism and conservatism, nationalism and socialism. While this is reminiscent of Russian narodism, the author emphasizes the necessity of exploring these contradictions in terms of the historical character of the post-colonial societies. Furthermore, it is stressed that an objective and scientific analysis of populism involves simultaneous study of the specificity and universality of the phenomenon. Certain broad generalisations without reference to the uniqueness of populism in the different Afro-Asian and Latin American Countries or mere micro-level analysis without taking into account some of the universal aspects of populism might affect scientific study of the phenomenon (pp. 6-7). Finally, Khoros disagrees with those marxists (like the Soviet scholar

Iskenderov) who tend to dismiss populism merely as a petty bourgeois ideology and thereby criticize it for being not in correspondence with scientific socialism (pp. 18-21). While the author broadly agrees with the position that populism is a petty bourgeois outlook, he suggests that populism has revolutionary as well as non-revolutionary potential and its mere description as a petty bourgeois ideology would not help us much.

Coming now to the more substantive aspects of the book, the author gives us a very thorough account of the ideology of Russian narodism with reference to its inner contradictions, viz., its progressive and decadent aspects. In tracing the roots of populism in the developing countries, Khoros identifies a number of factors like the gravity of the agrarian problem and presence of the peasant movement, weakness of the local bourgeoisie; a feeling of hostility towards bourgeois industrialism etc. (p. 51). Drawing a parallel between Russian narodism and contemporary populism, he argues that the latter contains, because of its contradictory character, bourgeois reformist as well as revolutionary democratic potential (p. 100). On this basis, he makes a distinction between populist and non-populist democratism, suggesting thereby that while populist democratism is primarily confined to accomplishment of anti-feudal tasks, it is limited by its inability to oppose capitalism and to go over to scientific socialism. Non-populist democratism, however, is more consistent towards marxism. What, however, is confusing is his general description of populism as an ideology of non-capitalist development (p. 102). The author himself argues in chapter 4, Part I of the book that traditionally populism has the tendency of moving between sets of contradictions like people-classes, individualism-collectivism, leader-masses, democracy-dictatorship etc. One wonders whether an ideology that is enmeshed in such contradictions can be broadly described in non-capitalist terms.

In Part II of the book, the author primarily concentrates on his analysis of populism in Asia, Africa and Latin America and thereby throws interesting light on Soviet interpretation of such figures as Gandhi, Jayaprakash Narayan, Fanon, Kenyatta, Nyerere. While this section of the book is quite rich in information and coverage, his interpretation of gandhism as a petty bourgeois ideology

might not be acceptable to many scholars who have worked on Gandhi.

To the reviewer, however, the section entitled "The attitude to scientific socialism" (Chapter 6, Part II) constitutes the most important contribution. While describing how populism as an ideology has been influenced by the ideas of scientific socialism, Khoros very correctly identifies the points of difference between populism and marxism and the implications arising therefrom. Referring to the experience of 'African socialism', the author argues that most of the populist doctrines suffer from insistence on nationalism, revisionism, abrogation of class struggle and proletarian internationalism (pp. 225-230). One wishes that the author could have elaborated this theme a little more.

The author finally concludes that as an ideology, populism contains within itself the tendency to either align itself with bourgeois reformism, leading ultimately to capitalism, or to go over to scientific socialism via the path of revolutionary democracy.

The printing is quite good. So is the design. While the notes given at the end of the book are quite rich and exhaustive, what one misses is a bibliography and a subject index. The book, it is expected, would certainly draw the attention of all serious scholars interested in the subject.

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